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Chapter One

THE LONG MARCH

1. Sources 2. The Nguni background 3. Foundation of the State 4. The residential system 5. Under Zwangendaba's leadership 6. Fission 7. Mpezeni's kingdom 8. Foreign policy

1. *Sources*

WHAT WE usually have in mind when we speak of a tribe or nation or empire is a large political unit enduring in time and space. The nation outlives its members, for as they grow old and die their children and grandchildren rise up to take their places. On its fringes there may be continual fluctuations, adjustments of boundaries and migrations of people, but always the majority of the population are born within the national territory and die within it as their ancestors have done before them. There is spatial continuity as well as biological continuity, and the same areas of land, sometimes even the same houses and fields, are occupied and cultivated by successive generations. The Ngoni State, whose history is the subject of this book, was clearly not a state of this kind. It was born suddenly, moved about from one part of Africa to another, and recruited most of its members from outside itself. Only at the end of the nineteenth century, when colonial rule was imposed by Europeans, was the migration of the Ngoni as an organized group brought to an end. Even so, the social and economic development of modern central Africa has ensured that the men and women who from time to time live in Ngoni tribal areas, fixed though these have become, are now part of a wider social system within which they travel great distances in search of work and of kinsmen, wives and friends. Yet despite these differences the Ngoni State, like other states and polities, has had structural, or institutional, continuity. It is an enduring organized social group with a history. The same forms of social organization have endured despite changes in space and despite biological discontinuity; and where these forms have changed there has been continuity even in change.

This history of the Ngoni from 1821 down to 1898 is essentially the history of an armed nation on the march. Our knowledge of it

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second-hand account of the Ngoni, and some relevant information is given by Soga (1930).

Good accounts of pre-conquest social life are not so numerous. The most useful accounts are those of Wiese (1891 and 1900), Angus (1899), and Deare (1928), based on observations in the years immediately prior to the war of 1898. For the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland there are the works of Elmslie (1899) and Fraser (1901 and 1914). Read, in 1935, was the first to apply modern methods of inquiry and has published comparative material on the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, Fort Jameson and southern Nyasaland, and on the neighbouring Cewa.

Some of this literature has found its way back to the Ngoni themselves, and children nowadays acquire their knowledge of the exploits of their ancestors as much from school books as from oral tradition. Under these circumstances, I decided that no useful purpose would be served by my trying to make conventional inquiries into tribal history with the aim of establishing what had in fact occurred in the past. I found it was impossible to tell whether similarity between an informant's account of a past event and a previously published version was due to common origin, independent invention, or good teaching in school. I was however concerned with the quite different problem of what use the Ngoni made of their history,[4] and I collected the histories of many counties, villages and people. For the material in this chapter I have therefore relied on the fullest and most lucid of these many versions of Ngoni history, that by Chibambo, an Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, supplemented by the writings of Poole, a member of the Administration at Fort Jameson for many years, and Lancaster, who was a game warden in the area.

2. *The Nguni background*

Before we can understand the Ngoni of central Africa we must first consider social conditions farther south, for it was from the south that many Ngoni came. From the sixteenth century onwards, south-eastern Africa was peopled by subsistence cultivators growing cereals and herding cattle. The Nguni, as the southernmost branch of these peoples is now called, occupied the area which has become Swaziland, Natal and the Transkei. At first the Nguni were not organized into powerful states but from the common background of Nguni society there developed, from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards, several strong political units. We may mention among others the Zulu empire under Shaka, the Swazi

[4] See my 'History in a changing society'.

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Chapter Two

THE SNOWBALL STATE

1. Manipulation 2. Age-sets 3. Officers of State 4. Continually segmenting systems 5. Lineage systems compared 6. Splitting the State 7. Stability

1. *Manipulation*

In our first chapter we outlined some of the more significant events in Ngoni history prior to the arrival of Europeans. In this chapter we shall examine the political system within which these events took place. It is not the task of social analysis to determine why these or any other events occurred. What we shall attempt is a discussion of how they occurred, and what were the principal social relations involved in them.

Most of the incidents referred to in the first chapter concerned the State as a whole or the royal family. Nevertheless, when we begin to consider the conditions under which the State endured we have to discuss the social position of ordinary men and women within the State. For the Ngoni State held together as an organized social group, and on occasion failed to hold together, not merely because Zwangendaba was a good leader or his sons quarrelsome or his brothers ambitious, or because his people were bound by custom and knew no better, but also, and in our view mainly, because the State was a viable social entity in its time and place. The arrangement of people into segments and age-sets was not a mere formal and static division, but a means whereby a motley heterogeneous collection of individuals was converted into an organized society with agreed aims. The structure of the State had rules; in other words there was regularity in its social processes. Yet it was a structure which, within these rules, could be manipulated. The structure could be, and was, utilized by individuals for the realization of their private ends at the expense of others as well as providing for the common good. This is probably true of all social systems. We shall begin our analysis by examining the ways in which this manipulation was carried out.

In most societies, from the simplest system of hunting bands to the complex societies of the modern world, one of the most significant sets of rights are those relating to fixed natural resources. The structure of rights in land provides a key to the structure of society.

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power. The history of the State and indeed of each subdivision within it was encapsulated in the formal relations between royal headquarters and between segments. Yet the system was always growing and every few years brought a new royal capital, a new chief, new headquarters for the heirs of large segments and new ambitious men as lieutenants. Each generation also brought greater divergence of interest between the constituent parts of each segment and of the State, as we shall discuss later. Before going on to examine the conditions under which the State split we shall turn aside to compare the Ngoni residential system with similar social structures found in some other societies.

4. *Continually segmenting systems*

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, in their *African Political Systems*, have provided us with a solid foundation for a typology of political systems in simple societies. It is therefore appropriate to consider what place the Ngoni State has in this typology. The authors distinguish three types of political system in Africa,[24] and we shall attempt to determine to which of these the Ngoni State belongs.

Their first type includes those small societies in which everyone is kin to everyone else, and in which political relations are coterminous with kinship relations. It is clear that Ngoni society was not of this kind.

The other two types are those referred to as primitive states, or Group A, and stateless societies, or Group B. Primitive states are characterized by the presence of organized government, i.e. centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, and of cleavages of wealth, privilege and status corresponding to the distribution of power and authority. In stateless societies there is no government, in this sense, and political relations are primarily regulated by a segmentary system of permanent unilateral descent groups.

This classification is sometimes taken to imply that segmentary systems are found only in stateless societies but not in primitive states. This implication does not follow inevitably from the scheme of classification, though it is compatible with it. It is, however, easy to assume that this implication is intended, for the authors frequently use the adjective segmentary to characterize stateless societies in contrast to primitive states. This implication is false, as can be shown by reference to a number of societies, and cannot have been intended by the authors, for elsewhere Fortes has written that 'It

[24] Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, pp. 6*f*.

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114 is quite possible for the sub-divisions of a centralized state to have
121 a segmentary social organization'.[35]

This unfortunate muddle is not helped by the use of the adjective pyramidal to characterize the social organization of primitive states, for when we need a visual symbol for a segmentary system as found in stateless societies, we use a triangle or pyramid.[36] There is, on reflection, an obvious difference between one office-holder having authority over a number of subordinates and one segment containing lesser segments within itself; but this difference is obscured by the similarities of spatial metaphor.

Under these circumstances, it seems best to eschew the use of pyramidal or segmentary as unqualified descriptions of either group of societies, and to follow the authors' alternative suggestion by speaking of Group A societies as primitive states, and of those in Group B as stateless societies. The presence or absence of a segmentary political system may now be handled as a separate question, providing a classification cutting across the division into states and stateless societies.

642 We have spoken throughout this chapter of Ngoni society as a state, and this usage is in accord with the definition of a state given
[643] here. The Paramount Chief with his lieutenants exercised supreme
[622] authority, there was a highly organized administrative machine, and there was an organized method of settling disputes within the
[556] State. There were only slight variations in wealth except in the
[554] control of cattle, but privilege and status were expressed in the residential system and were inseparable from the exercise of power and authority.

121 The presence or absence of a segmentary political system can itself be divided into two questions; was there a segmentary
631 system, and if so, was it the political system? If we have used the term segment correctly, then it is clear that the Ngoni did have a segmentary system, and that political relations within, but not without, the State were largely regulated by it. However, when Fortes and Evans-Pritchard use this word segmentary in their typology they are referring exclusively to lineage segments, or to major groups very similar in form to lineages. A segment of the Ngoni residential system was not quite the same as a segment of a lineage, and we must therefore examine what may usefully be meant by the term segmentary as applied to a social system before we can answer these questions.

[35] Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 234.

[36] e.g. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 201, and Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 34, diagrams.

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A wide variety of forms of organization can legitimately be spoken of as segmentary, and can be represented visually by pyramids and triangles. We may even speak of our own system of local government as containing segments (rural districts) which are characteristically grouped together to form segments of higher order (counties) and which are divided internally into segments of lower order (parishes). This *nesting* aspect of segmentation, as we may perhaps call it, by which social groups are arranged in a hierarchy one within another, is of too wide an occurrence to be useful for our purposes. Almost every known political system must be segmentary in this sense.

Nor is it the unilineal character of lineage systems which clearly marks them off from others. Until recently it was the general rule in Europe that a child took the nationality of its father, and we were therefore quite justified in talking of European nations as unilineally recruited groups. Yet we do not usually need a typology which places African lineage systems and European nations in the same category.

What then is the particular characteristic of lineage systems which significantly distinguishes them from the fixed social divisions of many states, and which they share with the Ngoni residential system? The critical characteristic seems to me to be that segmentation goes on continually. Every man (or woman) is the potential founder of a segment, and although a segment once formed tends to persist in time, more and more segments of lower and lower order are all the while being formed within it. We cannot count the number of levels at which the State is subdivided, as we can when there is a fixed hierarchy, for these points of subdivision are continually shifting with the passage of time and with change of context. It is difficult to attach labels to segments of different order or of different span, save in precisely defined situations. The magnitude of this difficulty is apparent from Fortes's elaborate descriptive armamentum, with its morphological minimal, effective minimal, nuclear, inner, medial, and maximal lineages, terms referring to successive stages in the life of a single segment, stages which occur at different times in the histories of different segments. The same difficulty arises in describing Ngoni segments, but it is not so pressing, since there was not the same differentiation of function related to degree of segmentation as is found among the Tallensi.

Because of this continuous process of segment formation, the system is governed by the same principles at all levels. A group formed in a specific way at a low level eventually becomes a high-level group, and thus at any one time the constancy of past formation

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63 [121] is reflected in present uniformity of organization.[27] Fortes, writing on the concept of a segmentary society, says

> '. . . It means that small units of a particular form are, like cells, associated together into larger units of the same general form, and these again associated into still larger units of analogous or identical form, and so on up to the limits of the system . . . the principles operating on one level presuppose the principles operating on a lower level.'[28]

17 63 121 Here he is describing the egalitarian, homogeneous, stateless society of Taleland, but his description fits Ngoni society very closely. The one significant difference in this matter between Ngoni and Tale society is that Tale society goes back into the unremembered past whereas Ngoni society was founded at a known and remembered time and place. Hence a certain amount of extemporization was necessary to get the system going, to adapt Nguni social organization to the peculiarities of Ngoni life, as we have noted in the relationship between the first Paramount Chief and his companions who became regional governors. Apart from this initial piece of social engineering, the system continued to perpetuate itself until checked by quite different external agencies.

In all these societies, the continually segmenting system has or had political functions. We may well ask if there are other societies in which there are continually segmenting systems lacking political functions. Gluckman has listed a large number of societies stated to possess corporate lineages, including some states as defined above. Some of these, for example the Tswana,[29] appear to organize their internal political relations not on the basis of these corporate lineages but through some separate administrative apparatus. What then is the social function of the lineage system in these societies, and is it continually segmenting? Evans-Pritchard has suggested that segmentation occurs where groups have political functions.[30] Nevertheless, among the Tswana, lineages do segment, even though they have only slight political significance, political action being largely determined by the ward organization.

We shall then take this process of continual formation of segments, which Firth calls the branching or ramifying process,[31]

[27] Fortes, *Web of kinship*, p. 341, suggests the term 'organic' to describe such a system. This word has so many other meanings that I am reluctant to use it.

[28] Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 232.

[29] Gluckman in Mitchell and Barnes, *Lamba village*, p. 4. cf. Schapera, *Tswana law and custom*.

[30] Evans-Pritchard, 'Nandi-speaking peoples', pp. 265*f*, and 'Nuer of the Southern Sudan', p. 287.

[31] Firth, *Tikopia*, p. 371.

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as diagnostic of the presence of the kind of segmentary society in which we are interested. All the societies included by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard in their stateless category, i.e. Logoli, Tallensi and Nuer, have continually segmenting political systems. Of the societies with government, the Zulu were like the Ngoni in being a State and yet having a political system which was continually segmenting. Both of these states were organized by a segmentary system even at the highest level, so that it does not seem necessary to follow Fortes in restricting segmentary systems to only the sub-divisions of states. In Shaka's time various changes came about in Zululand, such as the concentration of the army in a central area, which lessened the importance of the segmentary organization. But in the eighteenth century large-scale relations between and within the Nguni chiefdoms were governed by the agnatic segmentary organization, that is, by the division of the people into clans, sub-clans, and lineages and by the continual transfer of allegiance by lineage segments from one chief to another. Even during the period of the Zulu empire, the continual segmentation of the constituent tribes was important in maintaining the power of the central government over them.[32]

If one of the main characteristics of the well-known African lineage systems, both in stateless societies like the Nuer, Tallensi, Logoli and Gusii, and in primitive states like the Zulu, is their political function, we may well inquire if these systems are not also one type in a more general category of political systems. Although lineage relations are essentially distinct from kinship relations, a lineage system defines political relations in the idiom of kinship. Thus in agnatic systems, the relationship between territorial groups may be expressed in terms of the relationships between founding ancestors who were brothers or fathers and sons. We have seen how among the Ngoni the relationship between captor and captive, between lord and dependant, and hence the relationship between the segments they founded, was expressed in agnatic terms. The relationship between husband and wife, lord and lady, was employed to define the relationship between the political groups they led, and in this respect the Ngoni system may be seen as taking one stage further the process employed in lineage systems, where most relationships of this kind are phrased agnatically. Among the south-eastern Bantu, however, the relationship between lineage segments founded by paternal half-brothers is defined in terms of their mothers' position as co-wives. Among some central African peoples, this process has been carried even further than

[32] Gluckman, 'Modern Zululand', pp. 147-54.

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among the Ngoni. Thus the device of perpetual kinship among the Yao, by which the holders of certain chiefly offices stand in relation to one another in a fixed arrangement of kinship positions, of Paramount Chief to son and to sister's son and to brother,[83] would seem to be an example of what is essentially the same process as that by which the dominant lineage in one part of Nuerland is conceived of as descended from a brother of the founding ancestor of another dominant lineage. Where a political relationship is expressed in terms of the connexion between husband and wife, rather than between brothers' or sisters' sons, we may find that a woman is used to embody the political relationship, and she then plays what is essentially a political role. The many wives of the Ngoni Paramount Chief were clearly used in roles of this kind. Not only were they rapporteurs for the Chief, as Deare points out,[84] but they were also living symbols of the political relationship between their segments and the State as a whole. Another central African example of this is the Lele institution of 'wife of the village' by which a village, as a group, may stand as daughter's husband or wife's parent to its chief.[85]

Wherever political relationships of this kind are embodied in persons who have private lives of their own, be they queens or sons-in-law of the village, there is bound to be some domestic and inter-personal relationship alongside the corresponding political relationship. But that should not obscure from us the essentially political role played by individuals in these positions. The analogy with the dynastic marriages of Western Europe is clear.

One of the characteristics of lineage systems and of the Ngoni residential system is that the transition from the ties of domesticity and close kinship to purely political relations is a gradual one. The same principles of organization apply at all levels, and it is gradually with the passage of time and with increasing structural separation and internal segmentation that inter-personal relations are replaced by those between groups, and actions based on sentiments of love and hate give way to those based ultimately on an appeal to force. Relations between the larger segments of a lineage, although expressed in the idiom of kinship, and although possibly explainable historically in kinship terms, are relations between political units, whereas the relationship between brothers living under the same roof is not governed by political considerations. The critical point at which relationships of increasing scale become dominantly

[83] Mitchell, 'Social organization of the Yao'
[84] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April.
[85] Tew, 'Polyandry among the Lele'

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political would seem to be, for example, at the medial lineage among the Tallensi, beyond which generation differences are not recognized; and at the village among the Nuer. It seems probable that in the old Ngoni system the village was also the significant unit, above which relationships were dominantly political and below which they were largely determined by the multiplex sentiments and activities arising out of kinship and domestic association. This is certainly so in modern Ngoniland, although the same principles of organization no longer apply at all levels.

I have described elsewhere the critical position of the modern Ngoni headman, linking the political system with the network of ties of kinship and co-residence operative within the village, and similar conditions have been reported elsewhere by Gluckman and Mitchell. Above the village, whether in a state or in a stateless society, relations are in the main between enduring groups and are defined with respect to interests vital to the survival of these groups, even if expressed in the idiom of kinship.[36]

Granted the existence of primitive states with continually segmenting political systems, such as the Zulu and Ngoni, it is then possible to look at from another point of view the various African political systems for which there is adequate information. In terms of political segmentation on a unilineal basis, states like the Ngoni and Zulu are closer in form to the stateless societies of the Nuer, Tallensi, Gusii and Logoli than to the Nupe and Kede states with their administrative systems largely independent of unilineal affiliation. To document this point fully would take us beyond the scope of this book; our purpose here is merely to emphasize the importance in comparative studies of examining political structures from more than one point of view.

When talking of states, we make the convenient distinction between internal and external political relations. No such simple distinction can be made with stateless societies, for in them relations which are external to one segment are internal to the next higher segment, and yet may still legitimately be regarded as political relations. The pre-Shakan chiefdoms of Zululand formed a system similar to the Tallensi maximal lineages, and we may speak therefore in that instance of a segmentary system regulating political relations between states. Ngoni external relations were not regulated in this way, for the Ngoni were isolated and unique in a region

[36] For this section, see Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* and 'Kinship among the Nuer'; Fortes, *Web of kinship*; Wagner, *Bantu of North Kavirondo*; Mayer, *Lineage principle in Gusii society*; Gluckman, 'Analysis of a social situation' and 'Kingdom of the Zulu'; Gluckman, *et al.*, 'Village headman'.

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where other states, if states they were, organized themselves on quite different lines. Ngoni external political relations were restricted to acts of war. They harried their neighbours but did not bring them into enduring political relationship. When fission occurred, when the Ngoni State split into two, then indeed the fighting that took place was war between segments, and for a while an inter-segment relationship which had been internal became external and was mediated through force. Relations of this kind did not persist, for independent Ngoni groups soon diverged from each other, seeking weaker enemies.

5. *Lineage systems compared*

Our argument in the preceding section was directed to showing that the old Ngoni society was a state in which internal political relations were largely determined by a continually segmenting residential system. We compared it with other societies in which lineage systems provided the basis for political relations. We now have to ask how did this residential system differ from these similar systems; was it a kind of lineage system?

Gluckman has set out nine criteria by which a lineage system may be distinguished and which we may apply to the residential system.[37] In the first place we must expand the meaning of the word descent before we can call an Ngoni segment a unilineal descent group. However it seems justifiable to regard the process by which an Ngoni captive sundered the ties linking him to his natal community and was then incorporated in a new one as a kind of social death and re-birth.[38] We may then speak of a captive being socially descended from his lord. More familiarly, we must use descent to include social descent from a man when biological descent is from his kinsman acting as pro-husband for him after his death, and from a woman when biological descent is from her linked junior co-wife. With these extensions of meaning, we may regard the residential system as composed of unilineal descent groups.

Lineage segments, particularly small ones, are usually exogamous, whereas no Ngoni segment was automatically an exogamous unit. True agnatic kin could not marry one another, but the quasi-agnatic relationship between a lord and his dependants was not a bar, and a man and woman with the same captor were free to marry each other, even though they both called their lord *father*.

[37] Gluckman, in Mitchell and Barnes, *Lamba village*, pp. 4-5.

[38] cf. Warner's description of the passing of light-skinned Negroes in the United States into the White caste as 'social death'.

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segments nested in the same way as lineage segments; and a segment could be referred to by the name of its original head. A residential segment was not associated with a particular locality in quite the same way as lineage segments often are among settled peoples, for even the State itself was not tied to any particular place. Within the area occupied by the State at any one time, the villages belonging to one major segment seem to have intermingled with those of another, for there were not any temporary boundaries defining major segment areas, even for those led by regional governors. But smaller segments, occupying single villages or less, may be said to have been associated with a particular locality at any one time.

Our concept of a lineage system would then require considerable stretching to include the Ngoni residential system. It seems preferable to employ the wide term 'continually segmenting systems' when speaking of this general class of system, and to distinguish within this category a number of different varieties. Lineage systems belong to one variety, the Ngoni residential system to another. These two varieties do not exhaust the category. The Nyakyusa system of continually bifurcating states appears to belong to a third variety, and there may be more.

There are other criteria which have been used to distinguish different varieties of lineage system, and which we may apply summarily to the Ngoni residential system. Despite the great importance of women in the system, it was clearly a patrilineal and not a matrilineal system. It was a graded system with a single head to each segment, like the Zulu and unlike the egalitarian Nuer. The system had a single apex, one highest segment embracing the whole society, like the Gusii and unlike the multi-capped society of the Tallensi. As a corollary of this it had sharp boundaries and did not form part of a chain of interlinked societies. There was little economic differentiation save in the control of cattle and there was, on the surface, complete cultural homogeneity imposed by the State.

The characteristic formation of rump segments is lacking in many lineage systems, but is found among the Zulu and in the Swazi lineage,[41] and perhaps more widely, although in both these societies the process does not seem to have been as greatly developed as among the Ngoni. Among the Zulu and Swazi it led to a series of homesteads or villages corresponding to successive holders of the office of lineage head or king. Among the Ngoni not only was each

[41] cf. Holleman, 'Twee-eenheidsbeginsel van die Zulu' and 'Zulu *isigodi*'; Bryant, *Dictionary*, pp. 729*f*, s.v. *isizinda*; and Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, pp. 40*f*.

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successive head of a major segment memorialized in this way, but the major divisions of his polygynous household as well.

6. *Splitting the State*

When splits occurred in the State, the cleavages were along segmentary, and not age-set, lines. The headquarters of the highest segment was differentiated from the major subdivisions within that segment, and the various divergent groups can be identified by the different segments which they represented. Once fission had taken place, a realignment of segments was sometimes necessary. When after the death of Zwangendaba his great wife's segment was split, in each divergent group the man who was nearest in the line of succession to head of her segment claimed to be the rightful heir, and on the strength of that claim assumed leadership of the group.

Fission in the State was the end result of segmentation within it. Here we are using these two terms for two different processes. By segmentation we mean the process by which any social group becomes subdivided internally while retaining its own unity and cohesion. By fission we mean the process by which a social group divides into two or more distinct groups, so that the original group disappears as a social entity.[42] Fission in the Ngoni State occurred without affecting the arrangement of segments within each group, but did disrupt the highest segment of all, within which the divergent groups had hitherto been contained. Segmentation was a process of growth taking place at all levels but particularly at the bottom of the hierarchy of political groups, while fission was a process occurring only at the highest level. The process of segmentation in one generation could not alter the formal arrangement of higher segments determined in the previous generation, even though with each generation there was in fact an effective shift in the distribution of political power accompanied by spatial differentiation. The process of fission did not bring into being any new segments, but merely dissolved the highest segment of all as a cohering political unit. The two processes were thus formally and in reality quite distinct, even though it is clear that they were not independent of one another. Increasing divergence of interest found expression at first in the creation of separate segments and ultimately in the formation of separate states.

The processes of segmentation and of spatial differentiation within the State were in general peaceful. Fission was a hazardous

[42] This use of terms differs from that of Fortes. He uses 'segmentation' to refer to a *state* of internal subdivision within a group, and 'fission' to refer to the *process* of internal subdivision. cf. Fortes, *Web of kinship*, *passim*. I am indebted to Mrs. U. P. Mayer for this observation.

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Chapter Three

DEFEAT

1. Structural change 2. Portugal or Britain 3. Concession hunters 4. European consolidation 5. Friction 6. Fighting 7. Cattle 8. The end of a system

1. *Structural change*

178 619 64 THE STRUGGLES of the Ngoni during the middle of the nineteenth century were with groups of roughly the same character as themselves. The processes at work in the Ngoni social system were in the main repetitive. The State grew in size, split, and grew again, but it was still largely the same kind of State as before. Even though there were important differences between the Ngoni and their opponents, particularly after 1835, those whom they encountered were sufficiently like themselves to be absorbed into the system without difficulty. In the nomenclature of Radcliffe-Brown and the Wilsons, there was social circulation in the Ngoni State but little change in its structural form.[1] For this reason we have been concerned in our analysis so far with but few of the historical details of that period, and have dealt with history only in an abstract and generalized form. Many of the inconsistencies between various versions of the tribal legend have not been [114] significant. For example, Chief Ciwele Ndhlovu of Dowa broke off from the main body of Ngoni, according to some writers before, and according to others after, the split between Mpezeni and Mwambera.[2] It does not matter for our particular purpose which of these versions is correct, for we are here concerned only to establish that from time to time senior lieutenants did split off with their segments to form independent chiefdoms. This process, of which Ciwele's secession is an example, was essentially the same before and after the Mpezeni-Mwambera split.

648 178 12 After 1880 Ngoni history entered a new phase, and social processes began to operate which were not repetitive. Changes began to occur in the form of the Ngoni social field, for instead of interacting with groups similar to themselves, the Ngoni became involved in a much wider network of social relations. This change

[1] Radcliffe-Brown, 'On social structure', p. 4; Wilson, *Social change*, p. 58.
[2] cf. Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 32-3; Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 18; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 186.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

of scale,[8] as we may call it, was accompanied by major changes not only in the positions occupied by individuals in Ngoni society but also in the form of Ngoni society itself. We have to analyse at this stage a non-repetitive process, by which the autonomous Ngoni state, organized by a segmentary residential system and an age-set system, was changed into a dependent unit in a system of Native Authorities forming part of a world-wide colonial empire. For this reason the details of the process are worth noting, for in Ngoni history they are unique and largely determine the form of modern Ngoni society. Having established this significant sequence of events, we are then in a position to look at the same set of facts in a wider context. For what is unique and non-repetitive for the Ngoni may be repetitive in a wider context. The Ngoni are only one tribe among a myriad of tribes, and what happened to the Ngoni has also happened to many others. Similar sequences of events, each unique for the particular tribe concerned, have occurred throughout the world at various periods of time whenever small autonomous systems have been absorbed into large and more highly resourceful ones. We can therefore look at Ngoni history from 1880 onwards as either unique, from the point of view of the Ngoni, or as typical, or at least probably typical, of a repetitive process which has often occurred in the development of any empire.

Conveniently, at least some of the facts can be ascertained with reasonable certainty. We are no longer dependent only on oral tradition, but can refer to contemporary documents. These reflect in the main only the European side of Black-White relations, but even so their testimony is enlightening. I have therefore set out in full the history, mainly of external relations, of the Fort Jameson Ngoni from 1886 down to 1900 both with the intention of throwing light on how the transition was made from pre-conquest to modern society in this particular tribal instance, and also as an example of what seems probably an oft-repeated process in the history of any empire. A discussion of how typical the Ngoni experience is would take us beyond the bounds of this book. We should, however, bear in mind that the newer comparative method, as developed by Radcliffe-Brown and his followers, is as applicable to mammoth social forms, such as empires, as to small ones such as hordes, provided only that the right kind of data are available.

Our detailed documentation should extend down to modern times, but after 1900 there was a change in the kind of events that were documented, related as we shall see to a change in social relations, and we have to proceed somewhat differently.

[8] For the concept of scale, see Wilson, *Social change*, pp. 25 *ff.*

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

[p. v]

PREFACE

THE material on which this book is based was collected during three periods in Nyasaland as a Research Fellow of the International African Institute: May–December 1935; April 1936–June 1937; July 1938–August 1939.

The choice had to be made whether to concentrate on one Ngoni area and omit the other, and also whether to present Ngoni culture as a common element in both areas or to regard them as separate cultural areas. I decided to gather material from northern and central Ngoniland, and accordingly spent about one-third of the time in north Nyasaland and about two-thirds in central Nyasaland. I used the Nyanja language all the time in central Ngoniland, and found that many people understood it in the north. I learned some Zulu, enough to read and hear Ngoni when spoken, but it was dying out as a language except for certain ceremonial and legal terms and expressions. Very few people spoke it in central Ngoniland; most of the older people knew it in the north and in one area it was still the language of the home in 1936.

The decision to present Ngoni culture as a common constituent of Ngoni life in all parts of Nyasaland was made after the material had been analysed. I decided also to attempt a reconstruction of Ngoni life at the time of the first European contacts, when the kingdoms were at the height of their power. Men and women were still alive, when I was in Ngoni villages, who had fought as warriors, who had organized large households, who had been present at the accession and death of the Paramounts. Their experiences were part of Ngoni culture and inseparable from much of what was regarded as essentially 'Ngoni' in the 1930's.

In both areas the informants were of two kinds: those who welcomed an anthropologist who would collect and record Ngoni history, patterns of social organization, and cultural behaviour of which they were intensely proud; and those who were reluctant at first to give information, either because they were Christians and had been at school and said they had 'forgotten'; or because they were suspicious of all Europeans, and did not want to speak of what to them was a treasured and hidden heritage.

Working in more than one language medium and bringing into the open Ngoni terms not as a rule used in the presence of Europeans presented a number of problems both of terminology and orthography. I have included a glossary of Ngoni terms used frequently in the book. There were several variations of the prefixes in common use with Ngoni words, as for example *abalumuzana*, *alumuzana*, *malumuzana*, all three of which were used in northern and central Ngoniland. The clicks,

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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the northern Ngoni kingdom. Other groups of these Ngoni were found in three separate states in the Dowa and Kotakota districts. The Ngoni in the Ncheu district were known as Gomani's Ngoni and will be called in this book the central Ngoni kingdom. Four states which separated from this kingdom were found in the Dedza, Lilongwe and Cholo districts. The Ngoni in Fort Manning district belonged to Mpeseni's kingdom in the Fort Jameson district of Northern Rhodesia.

According to these census figures, the northern Ngoni kingdom with the three separated states accounted for 69,706; the central kingdom with the four separated states accounted for 46,891. Leaving out the Fort Manning Ngoni, there were 71,354 Ngoni in the rest of Nyasaland who had at one time formed part of the northern and central kingdoms and their offshoots, but who had dispersed in search of work and had made large settlements in the towns and on the estates of the southern province where employment was to be found. A similar dispersion from the main Ngoni concentrations in Nyasaland to Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa had taken place which formed part of the extensive emigration from Nyasaland in search of better employment than that available in the territory.

The existence of two Ngoni kingdoms, several smaller Ngoni states, and a still larger number of people enumerated as Ngoni but dispersed in every district of Nyasaland, poses a number of problems for the anthropologist. In this book I have concentrated on the two Ngoni kingdoms and on the Ngoni culture found in them in the 1930's. It was my intention, by focusing on the two kingdoms, to show that there was an Ngoni culture which had common elements in both areas and hence was shared to some extent by all the Ngoni living in Nyasaland. We shall be asking the questions in Part I—Who can be called Ngoni? What is Ngoni culture? Why do people in every district of Nyasaland enumerate themselves as Ngoni though a large number no longer live in the Ngoni kingdoms or in the Ngoni states? Are we discussing a people whose cultural affiliation survives political dispersal? The chief problem in the relation between the Ngoni kingdoms as political states and Ngoni culture will be stated in Part I and illustrated and analysed in the rest of the book. In this chapter, we shall examine the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of the two Ngoni kingdoms.

ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

There were four main groups of people in the Ngoni kingdoms, distinguished by the areas from which their ancestors came and designated by the Ngoni as 'those from the south', 'those from south of the Zambesi', 'those from the march' and 'those from this country'. The Ngoni said that the clan descent name of a person showed to which group he or she belonged.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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and settled where another village already existed.[1] In both forms, this new settlement was called the *kusangulu* village, 'the one which goes in front'; and the village which was left was known as the *gogo* village. This use of the term *gogo* (literally 'grandparent') for house and village had a common basic connotation. It expressed the concept of being left behind to look after something, the *gogo* house being passed over for the heir to the Paramountcy or chieftainship but charged with ritual and ceremonial duties; and the *gogo* village being left behind to take care of the traditions and generally also of most of the widows of the deceased Paramount or chief. Each *kusangulu* village eventually divided on the death of its owner, part 'going forward' with the new successor, part remaining behind. The main groups in the village which went ahead or which remained were the houses connected with the new Paramount or chief or *mulumuzana* and those connected with his dead father. In the chapter on houses (Chapter III, Part III) this process will be examined in greater detail.

The third related institution was the provision for guarding the spirit of a dead Paramount or chief and those of some leading *alumuzana*. A senior woman was always guardian of such a spirit and in her hut were kept the ritual objects: spear, wooden dish, baskets, fire-stick, which were used in sacrifices to the ancestors. The guardianship of the spirit of a dead Paramount was always associated with the village which had been his *kusangulu*. His corpse was buried on the edge of the kraal containing the cattle of the house where he had grown up, and this village became the *gogo* village associated with him, where his spirit was guarded in a hut, probably though not necessarily belonging to one of his widows. The recognition of such a woman guardian was a matter for selection and appointment, and was the responsibility of the senior men of the *gogo* house in that village in consultation with the senior men of the *gogo* house in the dead man's father's village. The concept of guarding the spirits of important men, and the means by which such guardianship was practised, will be more fully discussed in Part IV in connexion with the ancestor cult.

THE NGONI KINGDOMS AND AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

In the final section of this chapter we shall look at the Ngoni kingdoms in their relationship to other African kingdoms and states such as those described in *African Political Systems*.[2] A methodological problem arises here. In this study a number of references are made to the Ngoni kingdoms in pre-European times, especially in connexion

[1] This form of the institution was found in densely populated areas and the incoming households dominated the original ones.

[2] Fortes, M., & Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (ed.). *African Political Systems*. O.U.P., 1940 pp. 5–23.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

with the military organization and the Paramountcy. The main emphasis in the study is, however, on the Ngoni kingdoms in the 1930's, when the Paramount and the administrative organization under him were recognized by the Nyasaland government. Though certain elements in the kingdoms, as for example the position and authority of the *ulumzana*, were not recognized by the ordinance, the supreme authority of the Paramounts and the position of their appeal courts received additional support from the colonial officials, from the financial basis of the administration, and from the many new responsibilities of the Paramount for his people illustrated by the bye-laws made and the welfare measures carried out.

It is the Ngoni kingdoms as they functioned in the 1930's which will be compared with other African political systems, bearing in mind all the time that behind the Ngoni kingdoms lay the authority and power of the colonial government. The comparison will be made with the general characteristics of what were called by the editors of *African Political Systems*, in their introductory essay, 'Group A systems', and the references will be to the criteria and concepts in that introduction.

The main characteristics cited of the Group A systems were all to be found in the Ngoni kingdoms: centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions. These will be the chief material in Part II of this book on the Ngoni political system. In *African Political Systems* the editors stated that all the societies described in the book which were in the category of Group A systems were 'an amalgam of different peoples, each aware of its unique origin and history, and all except the Zulu and Bemba are still today culturally heterogenous'. Such a definition was appropriate for the Ngoni kingdoms, where political authority was wielded over several different peoples, as the ethnic grouping in the 1945 census showed, and where there was cultural heterogeneity among the different peoples. This second characteristic will be examined more fully in Chapter III of this section, dealing with Ngoni culture. To the factor of diversity within the Ngoni kingdoms should be added two other points made by the editors towards the end of their introduction where they said: 'Community of language and culture does not necessarily give rise to political unity, any more than linguistic and cultural dissimilarity prevents political unity.' In the next chapter we shall be discussing the relation of language and culture among the Ngoni, and between them and other Nyasaland peoples. The second point in the essay which is also applicable to the Ngoni kingdoms and their neighbours was stated in these terms: 'The overlapping and interlocking of societies is due to the fact that where political relations end is not the point at which all social relations cease.' The relevance of this statement to the Ngoni in Nyasaland has already been mentioned in connexion with the visiting which goes on between individuals from the Ngoni kingdoms and states. It

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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was still more clearly demonstrated by the attitude of the Ngoni 'of the dispersion', who returned for visits, some frequently and others at varying intervals, to their former homes though they were no longer in a political sense subjects of the Ngoni Paramount.

In the Group A systems, not only is the Paramount the political head of a culturally and ethnically heterogeneous state, but he is also a territorial ruler, and everyone living within the boundaries of his state is his subject. This was peculiarly a characteristic of the so-called conquest states, when effective administrative control was established within recognized boundaries after the conquest or surrender of neighbouring peoples. In the chapter on the military organization of the Ngoni, it will be seen how the nature of the military tenure of *alumuzana*, and the relation of groups of conquered villages known as *amilaga* to the central villages of the Paramount and *alumuzana*, emphasized the limits within which Ngoni authority was effective. One of the often repeated grievances of the older Ngoni was that the Europeans 'arrived too soon', before the Ngoni were able to establish effective authority over the whole country.

Two further points emerge in the introductory essay to *African Political Systems* which relate to the balance of forces within the Group A type of state and to the position of the Paramount. Both these points will be illustrated in Part II. The first concerns the relationship of the subordinate chiefs (called 'local chiefs' in the essay) to the central authority. They represented the central authority in the areas where they ruled, and they represented the people under them and their needs to the central authority. When the older Ngoni were talking about the Paramount in pre-European days, much emphasis was laid on his control of the chiefs and *alumuzana*, and on the obligation they felt to visit the Paramount in his village frequently, in order that they might appear to be carrying out his orders and not usurping undue authority. The older Ngoni also laid stress on the accessibility of the Paramount to all his people, provided—and it was an important proviso—that a man came to him with an intermediary, either his headman or his *mulumuzana*.

The final point of comparison between Group A systems and the Ngoni kingdoms is the mystical values bound up with kingship. This will be discussed in the chapter on the Paramount (Chapter II, Part II) and it is related also to the ancestor cult. The Ngoni Paramounts were more than ruling monarchs; they were the symbol of the unity of their state; in pre-European days the Paramount was the head of the army; and the ritual at the accession and at the death of a Paramount was related to the fertility of the land and the prosperity of the people.

CHAPTER III

NGONI CULTURE

AMONG the mixed ethnic elements in the Ngoni kingdoms the ruling aristocracy were those whose ancestors were of Swazi and trans-Zambesi origin, and whose clan descent names established them as belonging to the true Ngoni group. The families with these clan names formed also a social aristocracy in the villages where they lived, in the areas of the chiefs and *alawazana*, and in the Ngoni kingdoms. This social status, established primarily by the clan name, was visible in the position of the huts in the village, arranged at the head of the kraal; in the leading role played by the senior members of these families on all ceremonial occasions; and in the practice of a number of customs which were defined as Ngoni. Ngoni culture, as seen in social and ritual life, was a series of interwoven patterns of social organization and social behaviour. We shall outline these patterns here in order to bring together many of the forms and practices described in the rest of the book. In a more homogeneous society it would have been possible to find in these patterns a consistent and clearly defined culture. Yet one of the main problems in studying Ngoni culture in the 1930's was that there were many variations of each pattern and the anthropologist was all the time trying to find out what degree of cultural conformity existed among the Ngoni aristocracy. Of the different aspects of culture reviewed in this chapter, the ritual pattern was the one most consistently followed, and it was the one in which the Ngoni social aristocracy most clearly demonstrated that they had a distinctive common culture which was found in both kingdoms and in the secession states.

(a) *Kinship pattern*

Like the South-eastern Bantu from whom they came the Ngoni were patrilineal in descent and inheritance. Marriage was negotiated by go-betweens and concluded through the handing over of cattle, and the term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this form of marriage. An Ngoni woman married by this form was known as *mlobokazi*. A strict interpretation in the courts was given to this form of marriage as it affected the ownership and custody of the children. The children of a *lobola* marriage contract belonged to their father and could be claimed by him if the marriage broke up, or on the death of their mother. Traditionally, virilocal residence was an Ngoni custom, and it was supported by the house system whereby the male members of each house formed a group with economic interests in common through the joint ownership of the cattle in the name of the house. A widespread variant

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4
Tumbuka FR6

N 526

leave after meeting, withdrawing after a case in court, and initiating or concluding many other formal or less formal occasions. Children were taught to use the correct expressions and rebuked if they made a mistake, and it was one of the requirements in Ngoni families that a uniform standard of verbal politeness should accompany correct behaviour in posture.

CULTURAL AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES

N M 121 122

The anthropologist working in Nyasaland is aware of the problems inherent in any attempt to isolate cultural features within any of the larger ethnic groups found there. There were no ethnographic field studies published of any of the other ethnic groups when I was working among the Ngoni. Mary Tew, in *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*,[1] referred to scattered sources published before 1939, to which I had access; and from time to time Cewa informants wrote accounts of particular social institutions or ritual, from which I was able to make certain comparisons with Ngoni ritual and institutions. Some of the earlier accounts, such as that by Hodgson on the Cewa and Ngoni in the Dowa district,[2] assumed that all the cultural changes and 'borrowings' had been by the Ngoni from their Cewa neighbours, whereas I found in that area in 1939 Cewa villages where Ngoni cultural elements had been adopted.

N M 114 177

N M T 105

Ngoni cultural affinities with South-eastern Bantu	*Local tribal differences*	
Paramount and subordinate chiefs	Chiefs; no central authority except in Henga and Ngonde	
Patrilineal descent Virilocal residence Marriage by *lobolo*	Cewa and southern Tumbuka	Matrilineal descent, uxorilocal residence, marriage witnesses
	Henga	Patrilineal descent and virilocal residence
Clan exogamy " hierarchy Houses Age sets	Cewa	No clan exogamy " " hierarchy *Mbumba* group Girls' initiation schools
Cattle complex Ancestor cult associated with cattle	Tumbuka Cewa in Dedza district	Formerly cattle-owners but no terminology left and no association with ancestor cult
Burial customs: in skin near kraal	Cewa and Tumbuka	Graves outside village; buried in a mat

[1] Tew, M., *op. cit.*

[2] Hodgson, A. G. O. 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of Dowa District, Nyasaland.' *J. Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1933, pp. 126-64.

[p. 88]

CHAPTER IV

COURTS AND OFFICIALS

121 177 671 THE Ngoni claimed that when they established their kingdoms in Nyasaland they introduced a new idea of law, a different system of courts, and a different procedure for conducting cases in those courts, from those found among the local peoples. Within their kingdoms they imposed on all their subjects these ideas, courts and legal procedure as part of their government, applied to the conquerors and the conquered alike. We shall consider in this chapter only those aspects of the courts and the legal system which were related to the political structure. The categories of crime, the degree of punishment, the sanctions for enforcement of the law, and the effect of the judicial procedure on the balance of equilibrium in the community, all belong to a specialized study and are not included here.

THE NGONI CONCEPT OF LAW

692 643 671 We begin with two texts, the first from the northern kingdom by Cibambo, the second by Ishmael Mwale the Treasurer of the Paramount in the central kingdom.

[203] ¶ (1) The Ngoni seem to have been born with a gift for leadership or rule. Though they were a wandering tribe, yet there was one Paramount from whom proceeded the laws for the good government of the people. All the lesser chiefs and headmen received from him the leadership of the people. Though they had no way of writing to each other, they kept their unity by messengers passing between them. The Paramount had power to call gatherings from time to time, in which they talked of the affairs of the country. In these gatherings the old men and the men of repute who had a point to make were heard in criticism and made suggestions for the building up of the realm. By this means the Paramount and his counsellors learned of and understood the thoughts of their people. It was in such large gatherings that the laws of the country were delivered to the people, so that they might hold fast to them and not be punished unreasonably for breaking them in ignorance. After they came back from these gatherings, the headmen and men of standing gathered together their villages to tell the people what had been spoken in the great council of the Paramount, and told them carefully about the laws which had come from the gathering.

173 671 (2) Before the Ngoni came to this country the villages were small and isolated from one another. There was constant pouncing on people to catch them as slaves. It was unsafe to go even a quarter of a mile from one village to another, because a man might be in hiding and pounce out and catch you and take you off to his village as a slave, and there was no redress and no case was heard. Most people never went beyond the

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CHAPTER I

NGONI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A BRIEF review was given in Chapter III of Part I of the main elements of Ngoni culture, analysed into 'patterns' covering kinship, village lay-out, ritual, ceremonial, and language. In this section we shall be considering the principal social institutions embodying Ngoni culture: their clans, houses, families and age sets. We shall find evidence in the two kingdoms of an extensive common element in the social organization which the Ngoni brought with them from the south. Some important diversities will be evident also, such as the variations in virilocal residence found in the central kingdom, and the less widespread practice there of *lobola* marriage. Those elements which were common to Ngoni social organization in both kingdoms were often those which distinguished Ngoni culture from that of the neighbouring peoples. Patrilineal descent, the house system, the ranking of clans, the *laweni* organization of boys' life and activities—these were all distinctively Ngoni, practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and sometimes adopted by individuals and families of other clans who had been associated with the Ngoni over long periods. Nevertheless, in many of the villages of the central kingdom there were clearly two cultures existing side by side: the Ngoni culture being that of an aristocratic minority and the local culture that of the majority, who in the kingdom were equally subjects of the Paramount but in their villages possessed inferior social status.

Indications were to be seen, even in the more conservative and more isolated northern kingdom, that modern influences were affecting Ngoni social institutions. We have already noticed some of the effects of the cessation of warfare on a social system founded on military traditions. The exodus of young men from Ngoni villages to seek work elsewhere was very extensive, especially in the northern kingdom, where the level of education was higher but employment was not available, and this had repercussions on the age of marriage, the distribution of wealth, and the undertaking of family responsibilities, including the care of the old people. The gradual decline in polygyny, largely but not entirely due to the work of missions, was beginning to have its effects on the working of the house system and on the interrelations of the generations within the family group.

In the 1930's many of these modern changes were appearing but the traditional institutions were still functioning, and the Ngoni leaders themselves were clear about those forms and activities which were distinctively their own.

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father, had been a fierce ruler, and had gathered round him bands of young men who were not easily restrained. Though they could judge his character in this objective way, they respected his office, and hence his death and the confiscation of cattle which followed were a deep injury to Ngoni pride. So thirty years after his death they collected money and put up the memorial, and the appeal was supported for three main reasons. One was to commemorate this Paramount who had not had the traditional cremation by a river; another was to remove the shame of his death; the last was to draw together all his people in a common act. Every year numbers of Ngoni gathered at this memorial and held a Christian service which was followed by a general meeting. This memorial service and meeting had a definite link with the ancestor cult, and illustrated in a particular form Ngoni beliefs in the relation of the living and the dead.

In the 1930's, as we saw in Chapter III of Part I, the form of Ngoni funerals and the ritual of mourning were closely related to the ancestor cult and were practised by the Ngoni aristocracy. These forms of ritual and their beliefs they brought with them from the south, and they were an important part of Ngoni culture. We shall see in a later chapter how some of these cultural elements were combined with Christian ritual, both for leading individuals of Swazi clans and for lesser members of those clans.

CHAPTER II

CATTLE AND THE ANCESTOR CULT

THERE are many references throughout this study to the importance of cattle among the Ngoni. In this chapter the place of cattle in Ngoni life will be examined with reference to the ancestor cult, and hence certain limitations have been imposed in the selection of material and its interpretation. There will, for example, be no analysis of the role of cattle in the economic life of Ngoni families and villages. Much of the material discussed has an economic significance which is immediately apparent, but the limitations set will not allow the economic implications of certain practices to be pursued further here. It is important for the main purpose of this chapter to make a brief analysis of some factors in the ownership, care, and use of cattle, and to follow that with references to some of the values and attitudes inherent in the Ngoni ownership and use of cattle. I made a preliminary analysis of these factors in a memorandum on standards of living in the central kingdom, published

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in 1938.[1] The sociological and ritual significance of these factors will be the chief emphasis here, with reference to earlier chapters in this book on Ngoni culture and on the structure of Ngoni society.

In the sociological significance of cattle-ownership there are certain outstanding points to be emphasized, which will be indicated here and developed further in the analysis which follows. One is the connexion between cattle-ownership and status, illustrated by the dominance of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in village life, since their possession of cattle was related to the kraal and to the siting of huts and to their house organization. The cattle horns on the roof of the *indlunkulu* were no trivial ornament. They were a proud assertion of cattle-ownership attached to the residences of the leading women, with all the implications of 'house herds' of cattle and of *lobola* given and received. Closely related to cattle-ownership and status was the power conferred by the possession of herds. The status of leading families was enhanced by the ability to give feasts, to give *lobola* for their sons' wives, to make sacrifices to the ancestors and, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, to realize cash by the sale of beasts belonging to the herd. Cattle-owners did at times have to decide whether to maintain and augment their herds and thereby be known as wealthy cattle-owning families; or to sell cattle in order to command labour to build a modern brick house, or to buy fine clothes for their wives and display their wealth in another form.

In the organization of Ngoni society, cattle were an important factor in uniting groups of persons. We have seen how the house, as a group of men and women, and its variant, the central Ngoni form of *banja*, had common possession of a herd of cattle which formed a source of wealth for all members of the house. Within the house the senior men were bound together by the responsibilities attached to the ownership and care of a herd. Within the village the senior men of a house or *banja* united in the upkeep of the kraal, the supervision of the herd-boys, the tending of sick cattle, and in meeting or resisting the Government's demands for culling or dipping stock. Where cattle were boarded out in another village, ties of association in the care of the beasts and in accountability for them bound together the cattle-owners or cattle-keepers of more than one village. A stage in the adjustment of a young wife to a strange village was reached when she added to the herd of the house she had married into the gift cattle given her by her father and so partly compensated for those which had been given to him by her husband's family. A new wife's standing in a village was thus advanced through any cattle which flowed in the opposite direction from those of the *lobola* cattle. Finally, and this is the main theme of this chapter, cattle were an essential link between the living and the dead.

[1] Read, M. *Native Standards of Living and African Culture Change*. Memorandum XVI of International African Institute, 1938.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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Introduction

Like the wooden Ngoni meat dish, this book stands on three firm legs. It is the outcome of lecturing for over twenty years to teachers and students of education from all over the world on how an anthropologist approaches the study of education. It is the result of living for three and a half years in Ngoni villages in Nyasaland, watching how they brought up their children, hearing their reasons for the shaping of that upbringing, and seeing what use they made of formal education in mission schools. And lastly, since the war ended, young parents in several countries have talked with me now and then about how they were bringing up their children and what they thought of schools in relation to their home training.

I like to think, though it may be self-flattery, that a close study of the home and of parents' attitudes towards the bringing up of their children is an essential complement to the ideas presented to young teachers, and to older ones too for that matter, of what education is and how it works. I am often startled, and driven to furious thinking, when I come across statements like these: 'School is a civilizing place,' from the Harvard Committee on Education in a Free Society; or 'We have to rely on the schools for the training of character' from the Beecher Report on Education in Kenya; or 'The school is an institution specifically established to produce desirable changes in behaviour,' from the opening address to a symposium on Education and Anthropology at Stanford University, California. We all know that there are parents everywhere who are only too thankful to

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● 12 hand over to the schools, or to anyone, the continuous and exacting task of seeing how children behave, watching the development of their individual character and abilities, thinking out and putting into practice ways in which the young barbarians can eventually become useful members of a community. That last word, 'community', is perhaps the clue to those parents, and it seems to me that there are many in western countries and in Africa and India and elsewhere today, who are consciously, and with increasing interest, taking on their shoulders the job of bringing up their children and hoping for co-operation from the school and teachers in that task.

What are these families, the interested ones, aiming at in bringing up their children and what means do they use to forward those aims? Are they chiefly concerned with the way their children fit into and regard the intimate family group of which they are a part, and the larger circle of kinsfolk and relations, sometimes real to children if they live near and meet often, sometimes shadowy if they are seldom seen, sometimes a joy and sometimes a menace to the more intimate family life? Do parents also want their children to fit into the local 'community' whatever it may be, a village, a suburb, a city street? Or are the parents themselves rather conscious of belonging to a selected group of neighbours and friends, and do they want their children, as they grow up, to be identified with this, or a similar group? Do these parents want their children to identify themselves solely or mainly with their own age group in school and in the neighbourhood? Or do they envisage that growing children, even at their most individualistic and aggressive stages, should learn to fit in with younger children, with adults in general and with older people, and should develop attitudes and behaviour which have a wider social significance than those displayed in the classroom and the playground?

These are the kind of questions which many young parents are asking themselves today. Sometimes they

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get together and talk about the peculiar ideas of teachers about children in general and their children in particular. They wonder how far school standards of behaviour and school codes of morals harmonize or clash with family ideas on behaviour and family ways of living. There is sometimes an attitude of aggressive criticism on both sides, parents and teachers; occasionally it becomes an attitude of cheerful and friendly co-operation; quite often parents and teachers shrug their shoulders with resignation at the gulf which separates home and school, and look for another scapegoat, like an education authority, on which to put the blame.

This situation, which embraces the outlook of parents on their children's present and future, and their attitude towards schools, teachers and education systems in general, is world wide—it knows no national frontiers. When parents and teachers from different countries get down to talking about these questions, they can understand each other's problems in general terms, though they have to explain to each other the specific cultural forms in which these problems appear in each country, with regard to learning and using more than one language for example. In the groups of students to whom I lectured, many of the teachers from overseas were also parents, but very few of them had ever considered the education of their own children in school in relation to the pattern of family and home training in their own society. Many of them discovered an alarming number of problems which demanded their attention—alarming because they were obliged to consider and formulate their own family attitudes towards child training, and at the same time to contemplate and criticize the school education which they had accepted so whole-heartedly as the vital step towards progress for their children and their nation. Every now and then my confidence in the usefulness of this anthropological approach to education was fostered by an angry young man who came up after a lecture and said 'Why was I not told about these things when I was training as a teacher? How

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●121 can my country begin to understand these things?' From Somaliland and the Sudan, from British Guiana and Jamaica, from Malaya, India and Pakistan, and from all parts of Africa came these indignant reactions, and from those countries and many others I have had in letters over many years references to 'those Ngoni people you used to talk about'.

So it is with young parents and young teachers chiefly in mind, though I hope with some young anthropologists too, that this book has been written. I have for instance avoided
128 as far as possible technical jargon, that seemingly essential language in which anthropologists, educationists and many others wrap up and conceal their hidden mysteries from the common man. In the appendix will be found certain definitions of terms which have crept in and whose use has been inevitable in the Ngoni cultural setting, and also some of the vernacular terms for which I have substituted the nearest English equivalent. Here and there I have had to introduce a vernacular term but there are not many. The book is so arranged that the five narrative chapters (III to VII) follow consecutively. Chapters II and VIII are concerned with an analysis of some of the problems presented by the study, and can be skipped by those who do not like problems but want a straight story. Chapter I is I think essential to a full understanding of the narrative chapters, because Ngoni children were not brought up in a vacuum, but in a very specific political and social situation—as indeed all children are.

There will be plenty of criticism about the material and the focus in this book. Indignant young women will say 'What a poor deal the Ngoni mother had! Did the father and the grandmother really have it all their own way?' The answer is partly that a writer has to use bold outline strokes in painting his picture or it becomes hazy and lacking in purpose; and partly that young Ngoni mothers knew that one day they would be grandmothers and then they would

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186 563 621 in the village, whom they regarded as inferior not only because they had been conquered, but because they disliked and despised their way of living. This sense of separateness from and of superiority to the non-Ngoni elements in the villages had its counterpart in the close ties which existed with Ngoni families in other villages. These ties were reinforced socially by 'dynastic' or inter-clan marriages, and politically through the hierarchy of courts and officials leading up to the Paramount's court and entourage.

565 621 [183] [177] The Ngoni aristocracy endeavoured to maintain their traditional ways of living and of bringing up their children in the face of changes creeping in from the non-Ngoni elements in the village, as well as from external European influences. The maintenance of Ngoni ways of living and cultural patterns of behaviour depended on three main elements in village society. One was the degree of integration between the Ngoni men in their house groups and in village society as a whole. This was most evident in chiefs' villages, and in the villages belonging to the heads of clans. The second element was the number of wives of true Ngoni families who had married into the village, thus combining the influence of husband and wife, or rather of father and mother, in bringing up children on the Ngoni pattern. The third element was the number and influence of senior women of Ngoni families, either wives of older men in the village, or widows of former leaders. This senior women's group, many of whom were addressed as 'mother' by the Ngoni fathers of young families, were a formidable force in maintaining tradition, by advising their sons, coercing their daughters-in-law, and holding on to their authority at every stage of the children's development.

[582] [631] [562] [593] [606]

Life in two Ngoni villages

● 121 [114] I am going briefly to sketch in, as a general background for the following chapters, the main features of two villages, in one of which I lived for several months, in the other for a few weeks.

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a few weeks. They were both dominated by important Ngoni families, and both the headquarters of subordinate chiefs. They both represented that blend of old and new in Ngoni life which was continually keeping the anthropologist on her toes.

Enkodlweni was far from main roads and centres of modern life. When I first went there my lorry cut a swathe of grass knee-high on the so-called road to the village, and the radiator, choked with grass seed, boiled all the time. I lived in the mud-and-wattle hut maintained by the chief for visiting teachers and missionaries opposite the school, a four-standard school under an able young headmaster, well educated and well trained. He and his schoolboys, the resident evangelist and the court clerk represented the new elements in village life. Yet they were not cut off from the Ngoni way of life—on the contrary they were very much part of it and very proud of being Ngoni. The school had been taught in the Ngoni language, akin to old Zulu, until a few years before my visit, and the children were still given Ngoni proverbs to write in their copy-books. Several of the older people had books in their huts written in Zulu as well as in English, and Ngoni was still spoken as the home language in many of the households. The older women knew the traditional special vocabulary used by women only, and dressed their hair in the high chignon style. Proverbs were quoted often in the court and in church; stories of war against the Bemba people in Northern Rhodesia forty years ago were told by the kraal gate as if they happened last year. Several leading Ngoni clans were represented in the village, and each had their own praise songs and forms of addressing their ancestors.

The old evangelist, himself a member of a famous clan, had been threatened, thirty years before, with death by the former chief if he continued to teach and preach. He stayed, notwithstanding, and had become one of the trusted counsellors of the present chief. During the day he joined the

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II

Growing up among the Ngoni

The approach to this study

Among the several titles used to describe this and similar kinds of studies, such as child development, child study, child training, socialization, I think the ugly but useful term socialization most nearly covers the theme of this particular study. I much prefer, mainly on aesthetic grounds, the non-technical, non-committal expression 'growing-up', used in the title of this chapter and established long ago in the pioneer study of Margaret Mead in New Guinea. I realize, however, that this title could be misleading if readers expected a psychological as well as an anthropological approach, and looked for psychological analyses and techniques applied to children at different stages of their development. The arguments for a joint approach by anthropologists and psychologists are well known, and have been clearly stated in the introduction to Dr H. M. Ammar's recent book: *Growing up in an Egyptian Village*. On the whole, in most studies of 'growing up', the psychological emphasis is much stronger. We frequently find descriptions of infancy and the early years of childhood set out in psychological terms familiar to western society, without what I consider as the essential complement, an equal emphasis on the aims and methods of that particular society in training its children. This complementary study could and should be predominantly the task of the social anthropologist, but it is one which has hitherto not attracted a great deal of attention from anthropologists in their field studies.

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121 One more word about 'growing up'. It has in popular language often been associated with 'he just growed, like Topsy', implying a minimal amount of direction and a maximum amount of free response by a child to all external stimuli. No one can, of course, control a child's inner response to direction and training, but more often than not a child can and does learn, for a variety of reasons, to show the overt response expected by the adults who are bringing him up. The potential conflict in a child between his inner and overt responses lies within the field of individual psychological studies, and I am well aware that in this respect as in others this study is incomplete.

However, as I endeavoured to suggest in the introduction, this is a society-directed study in which the focus is on how adults bring up their children to fit into their society and to perpetuate their cultural values. The emphasis, therefore, here is on the training of children as part of the social life and cultural aims of the community, and the children's response is regarded from the angle of how they learn what the adults have to teach. Here and there I think I may have lost the thread of learning in following the thread of teaching—too close a concentration on two foci can produce a squint which is not always the best way of looking at situations. The main emphases in the training of Ngoni children, perhaps of children everywhere, are on behaviour, on skills and on knowledge. If we want to understand the process carried out by adults in training their children in any of these respects, we have to keep asking the questions, familiar to educationalists: what is taught? Who teaches it? When do they do it? In what contexts do they do it? It would be tedious in the extreme to keep on asking these questions in the following chapters, and to use this method would certainly break or hopelessly entangle the threads of learning and teaching in Ngoni society. Those questions however [128] have been in the background and implicit all through the narrative chapters from III to VII. If readers cannot find

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answers to them somewhere, then there have been some vital omissions in the narrative.

Clues to this study

In relating this study to other field studies and analyses of socialization techniques and processes, I have not attempted to present here any general assessment of similar or related studies, much less any review of the field as a whole, since I have touched on both in earlier publications.[1] Instead I have brought into this chapter one or two clues or guide lines from other sources which seemed to me to elucidate some of my problems, particularly in regard to four main aspects of this study, which have already been mentioned in Chapter I and which to a large extent set the limits and determine the emphases of this book. The 'true Ngoni' were a society within a society, a distinct cultural group within the Ngoni kingdom. This society of theirs had sharp edges, definable and recognizable limits, and that partly accounted for their own awareness of themselves as distinct from, though at so many points connected with, the neighbouring peoples. Their culture, that is their way of living within this society, had definite values which they strove to maintain, and this was one of the reasons why the ideal Ngoni personality pattern, and their endeavour to see it reproduced in each child, was easy to recognize. In order to safeguard their society and maintain their culture they exercised a fairly rigid social control over the upbringing of their children, which resulted in something approaching a 'system' of training and educating children. Set against this conservation of traditional values however was the reality and extent of changes due to external circumstances mentioned at the end of Chapter I. In the face of these changes the Ngoni showed that they could adapt some of them to their own purposes, and they made use of the schools, for example, once they approved of them, to help adjust their

[1] See Appendix (i)

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177 society and particularly their children to new ways of living and thinking. These then are the four aspects of the study
121 for which I sought clues: awareness of their society, definite cultural values, social control of bringing up children, adaptation to external change.

114 In alluding to the following authors and the ways in which
121 they furnished clues for this study, I hope it may lead readers to consult the full works for themselves, and indeed to explore others which can be found in any good bibliography on socialization or on personality and culture. Over many years I have read and re-read Ralph Linton's *The Cultural Background of Personality*, in order to throw light on my own studies and to illustrate my lectures. When assembling the material for this Ngoni study I welcomed and followed up his thesis that 'some groups are much more conscious of the existence of culture and much more prone to generalize about behaviour than others'. That and other passages certainly helped to throw light on the Ngoni awareness of their own culture and their articulateness about behavioural training.

Linton also assisted me, though I did not completely agree with all his analysis, in placing cultural values in their relation to the accepted personality patterns. I used here other clues, and notably those provided by Monica Wilson in her book *Good Company* and John Whiting in his field manual for studies of child training. The Nyakusa values, brought out so clearly by Professor Wilson, I was able to compare with Ngoni values. Among the Nyakusa, 'good company', dignity, display, decency, wisdom, were constantly stressed and behaviour on these lines was commended by adults. The Nyakusa were a homogeneous and secure people, whose system of age-villages was unique among the surrounding peoples and a powerful force in maintaining and developing socially desirable forms of behaviour. Dr Whiting, in his field study manual, suggests eight 'systems of behaviour' for field workers to observe and classify in terms of individual

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child behaviour. Five of them appear to suggest values some of which have a place either in Nyakusa or Ngoni ideal personality patterns: self-reliance, obedience, responsibility, sociability, dominance. But there is at least one major difference between the approaches of Professor Wilson and Dr Whiting to the training of children. Professor Wilson is describing the values of Nyakusa adults and their effect on the bringing up of children. Dr Whiting has selected from a series of cultures certain typical or common forms of behaviour which might be displayed by children. These forms of behaviour might represent general social values, but they are not set in the context of any one culture, and the criterion is whether an observer saw a child displaying sociability rather than whether the society desired their children to show sociability and took steps to encourage it. This book was after all a manual to be usable in a number of cultural situations. His emphasis is nevertheless on the observed behaviour of selected children, and illustrates my point made in the early pages of this chapter; whereas Professor Wilson's emphasis was on the adult ideal personality to which, it was hoped, Nyakusa children would conform.

The existence of a 'system' in the upbringing of children, a system set up by a society and under its control, posed a number of questions. Clyde Kluckhohn in several of his books has for a long time provided me with clues in the study of 'systems', and many of these clues are summarized in the chapter on Personality and Culture in his book *Mirror for Man*. Especially in two directions these clues have proved helpful: in his distinction between two kinds of cultural learning, technical and regulatory, or acquiring skills and learning to behave, the latter taking place in the early years of childhood, and acquiring skills in later years; and in his theme of predictability, illustrated in this quotation: 'A definition of socialization in any culture is the predictability of an individual's daily behaviour in various defined situations. . . . When a person behaves most of the

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time as others do in following cultural routines, he is then socialised.'

I have deliberately carried on the study of the Ngoni 'system' through what are generally called the adolescent years. In so doing I followed some of the clues in Professor Linton's discussion of how different societies treated adolescence and its alleged problems. Dr H. M. Ammar also provided a clue in his account of the sharp gulf in the Egyptian village of Silwa between child and adult, between the ways of childhood and the values of adulthood. But in sorting out the problems which the Ngoni study presented, I have drawn also on my recollection of discussions with Dr Kurt Hahn at Gordonstoun about the place of adolescents in society, and whether what is commonly called 'an awkward age' is necessarily part of a child's growing up. Two particular contributions of Kurt Hahn's have thrown light on the young Ngoni adult. One was the correlation between physical stages of growth and social responsibility; and the other was the close connexion between acquiring skills which are socially valuable and essential, and the general maturing of the young adult, especially in his growing confidence in himself and in his self-respect.

On the fourth point, the effect of external changes such as schools on child training, I found much that was useful in Oscar Lewis' *Life in a Mexican Village*. It seems to me he has gone further than most anthropologists in examining the school and its methods and ideas in relation to a traditional culture and society. From an educational as well as from an anthropological angle, H. M. Ammar's analysis of the place of schools in Egyptian villages is also very stimulating.

Social horizons of Ngoni children

Most studies of child training concentrate, or at least place the main emphasis, on a child in his family setting, with the connotation of a family in the western individual sense of father, mother and their children. The subsequent chapters

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VI

The Threshold of Adulthood (i)

The study of adolescence

Studies of adolescents as an age-group, of the adolescent boy and girl in society, and of the characteristics of the stage called adolescence, have assumed certain principles and have stated certain conclusions in terms of western society. These theoretical leads need examining closely before they can be applied to, or assumed to have validity for, non-western societies. This points on the one hand to the problems raised in Chapter II of the emphasis on individual psychological development in western studies of childhood and adolescence. It also suggests that a follow-through of any culture-personality study, whether in homogeneous relatively isolated cultures, or in rapidly changing cultures, involves a re-examination of the relation between individual development on the one hand and social control and training on the other, and this latter requires an analysis of the aims of the society in terms of its methods in bringing up its children.

Several questions need stating here in general terms and these in turn lead to specific questions about Ngoni culture and society. Are there cultures and societies in which childhood can be said to end at a particular age or stage? Are there others in which adulthood is said to begin at the end of the childhood stage? Are there others again, as most studies of western societies assume, in which an intervening stage between childhood and adulthood is recognized which is commonly known as adolescence? If adolescence as a stage in development is recognized, what are its age-limits or other

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121 forms of limitation? And what are the chief characteristics which distinguish it from childhood on the one hand and adulthood on the other?

Studies of non-western societies suggest a variety of answers to these questions, and the answers are related to the social structure and the organization of social relations within the society, and to the economic demands made on different age-groups in the society. Societies with a marked age-set system have one set of answers; societies where economic necessity determines the role of all but small children have another. Every type of society is differently affected by the introduction of the modern school systems which cut across traditional views and practices on age-role and age-status.

There is nevertheless, as the title of this chapter is intended to convey, in every society, and particularly in non-western societies not as yet completely changed and dominated by school systems, a stage when adult behaviour and adult competence in technical skills is expected from the rising generation. This may occur before, at, or after the onset of physical maturity at puberty. A society which has exerted a conscious and directed control over the upbringing of its children regards the threshold of adulthood as the testing of its methods of socialization, calling perhaps for a re-alignment of emphases in training, in view of the advent for these young people of greater responsibility in social relations and of demands on them for effective economic co-operation. In other words, this threshold of adulthood is a test of the effectiveness of training children and young people to conform to the personality pattern of the culture of the society, and for the young individuals themselves a test of their adjustment to that pattern.

Initiation schools

The study of adolescence as a recognized stage of individual development in non-western societies has been influenced by three main factors: the attention paid to the physical changes

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at puberty and their subsequent implications for marriage and sexual life; the social recognition by the society of the significance of this change; and the rituals which marked this transition. Initiation rites, as a form of *rites de passage*, occur in many societies immediately after puberty. The majority of these initiation rites takes the form of a 'school', involving a period of seclusion in some remote locality away from normal social life, varying degrees of physical endurance tests, instruction in traditional hygiene and sex life and in correct behaviour to senior people, with an intense emphasis on submission to authority. At the end of the seclusion period, which varies in different societies from a few weeks to three or four months, there is generally feasting and other forms of rejoicing when the initiates return to their villages to resume normal life but with a new status.

The underlying aim in many initiation rites was to bring home to the individuals, and to the entire age-group which they represented, the dominant importance of fertility in the life of their society. This lesson among the Cewa, one of the ethnic groups living close to the Ngoni, was driven home by a second ritual which occurred at the first pregnancy of every married woman. In sociological and psychological terms the aims of the ritual in initiation schools were to strengthen the individual at a time of crisis in his life, to sanction his new status in society after the period of seclusion and instruction, and to assert the authority of society over the individual through the solemnity and rigour of the ritual. One purpose of these rituals which has not received much attention was to bring together separately boys and girls in homogeneous sex and age-groups for the last time before they broke up into separate heterogeneous relationships on marriage.

Ngoni puberty rituals

The Ngoni, unlike the ethnic groups by which they were surrounded, had no initiation schools either at or after puberty. In spite of their cultural emphasis on the importance

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VIII

Personality and Character

Personality, culture and character

128 The threads of teaching and learning whose ends were grasped in Chapter II have been followed through the intervening five chapters, and our task now is to see what pattern they have made of the system of training given by the Ngoni to their children. The threads have eventually been twisted together to form two separate but linked strands, one the 121 achievement of the Ngoni basic personality and the other the development of individual character. In this chapter I am going to use personality in the sense derived from Linton and Kluckhohn, namely the sum total of the traits which are desired by a society and form part of its culture, and which are instilled into children in the system of training set up by the society. Personality therefore since it is regarded as an aim in child training is a social product. The ideal personality is held up to the growing generation, not so much as a total achievement, but as the acquisition of a number of traits of behaviour, skills and knowledge. The Ngoni basic personality [157] therefore consisted of common personality elements in adults, [155] which, as Kluckhohn says, were largely a product of learning, and that learning was directed and controlled by the system of training. Character on the other hand I am going to use as the sum total of the individual's response to his training. It therefore includes his personal adjustment to the training given by the society, and, as a result, his acquiring of some or many of the basic personality traits, and hence the degree of his approximation to the ideal personality. Over and above

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this overt response to training, character is the distinctive individual twist given to the basic personality, together with certain special abilities and individual traits which might be in harmony with, or at variance with, the basic personality traits. When an individual showed abilities and traits which harmonised with the concept of the basic personality, he was recognised as a 'good character'. If however he developed traits which eventually showed his failure to adjust to the basic personality, then he was, or would probably become, a 'bad character'. The 'badness' was his responsibility due to a series of choices which he had made, though it might also reflect on the training given in his earlier years.

The Ngoni had a word which very nearly expressed their concept of individual character. They spoke of a person's 'own human nature' (*Ubuntu*), 'the human nature of himself'. Thus they recognized, as studies of personality and culture are bound to recognize, two distinct results of child training, arising from the interweaving of the threads of teaching and learning, namely the development of young men and women into Ngoni adults whom the society regarded as fulfilling, at least to some extent, their ideals of behaviour, skills and knowledge; and the development of young individual adults, distinguishable each from his fellows by the individual character he displayed before his elders who either approved or disapproved of him.

Anthropologists on the whole would agree with Kluckhohn that so far they have studied personality as a socially directed product rather than the unique product of each individual's growth and development. Individual reactions and responses are recognized as being primarily in the field of psychology. But the anthropologist and the educationist can make some claim to understanding this essential complement to individual personality studies. On the one hand they find the society they are studying recognising values which do not always fit into an accepted basic personality pattern. On the other hand they become aware that individual reactions to

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121 learning, and the end product of a system of training, can never be as stereotyped and as uniform as some of the exponents of personality and culture studies would have us believe.

128 The outlines of the ideal Ngoni personality have really been sketched in the narrative chapters, though without stopping to point out specifically that this or that aim in training is to foster a Ngoni personality trait. I shall therefore in this chapter put together these traits, and, to introduce a new element and so avoid too much repetition, some of these traits will be associated with Ngoni proverbs. But before doing this I shall discuss those Ngoni values which I believe were the foundations for their child training.

The Ngoni system of values

121 The chief reason for introducing at the end of this book such
128 an involved and difficult subject as values is to suggest that there is an inevitable connexion in any society or culture between an ideal personality and the values cherished by that society. It is therefore reasonable to follow up, and to some extent to sum up, the preceding narrative chapters of this study with a glance, for it cannot be more than that, at the fundamental beliefs and values which impelled the Ngoni people to pursue certain lines in bringing up their children.

181 We have seen that there was a continuous and clear direction in training children which I have called a system. The more deeply one analyses the nature of Ngoni culture and the organisation of Ngoni society, the clearer it becomes that there were certain definite values which they clung to as a result of their experience and of their reflection upon their past history and present and future prospects. In so far as these values were integrated into an intelligible whole, we can call them a system of values, but the recognition of such a system does not preclude the recognition also of some isolated values which do not appear to fit into an integrated system.

121 One of the major difficulties in examining the values of a non-literate culture is the inevitable subjective approach of

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the observer or anthropologist. One such observer might pursue the line suggested by the use of different persons of the verb and different pronouns in personal contacts, and the values inherent in such standardized usage. Another might choose to examine the institution of the boys' dormitory and its contribution to the total value system. Another might take the different emphases in bringing up boys and girls in relation to the fact that men were the permanent element in village society and that girls left the village on marriage. A dozen more examples could be taken from the narrative chapters of this study and usefully followed up. They would all illustrate, in the first instance, the subjective nature of the initial selection, whether the final results of several different investigations made a coherent integrated system or not. They would also illustrate the uncharted area of such studies, where there is little to guide the observer and the analyst, in spite of the growing interest in recent years in studying the value systems of non-literate societies.

Among the leads which I found most useful has been Professor Monica Wilson's *Good Company*, to which I referred in Chapter I, where she associated cultural values with the age-village system in Nyakusa society. I owe much also to help and suggestions given to me at Harvard by Professor Cora Du Bois and Dr Ethel Albert, and to Professor Kluckhohn and his associates in discussions on their published and projected series on the study of values.

The relation between Ngoni values and their ideal personality pattern is based on the study of their society and culture described in my earlier book, and on the analysis of their system of bringing up children in this book. I referred in Chapter II to certain values as group values and to others as personal values. I am not sure that the distinction is a valid one, but it is a convenient form of classification and it corresponds closely to the Ngoni way of thinking. They were continually referring to their society, or a local community in it, as if it were an integrated whole, and to the effect of

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IX

Some Educational Reflections

Education, culture and society

● 121 We saw in the introduction that the main objective in this study was to see what the Ngoni parents were aiming at in bringing up their children, and how they had worked out a system which they believed suitable for their society. It was suggested that some of the aims and methods used by the Ngoni might throw light on some of the problems which faced young parents and teachers today. This does not mean of course that the methods used by the Ngoni are in any sense transferable to other peoples and other times. They were tried out in and related to a specific situation. Nor does it mean that the aims of the Ngoni in their education could be in any way compared with parental aims in bringing up children in our own day and age, and in our own society. The very sharp contrast between Ngoni life and thought, and our own ideas and our present situation, makes any kind of close comparison invalid and a waste of time. What we have to try to do, if this study has stimulated us to think more deeply about these matters, is to understand the relation between aims and methods in the Ngoni system of education, and to stretch our own concept of education beyond the limits of formal learning and regular schooling to include what many American educationists call 'adjustment to life'.

American educational thinking is turning more and more towards social and cultural anthropology as a guide to analysing educational problems in their schools, in their

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homes, in their communities and in their national life. There are several reasons for this tendency. One is a recognition of the limitations of individual psychology as a guide to the understanding of how children grow up. This arises from the newly perceived importance of culture, in the anthropological sense of that word, as a total way of living of a specific group of people, which may be that of a fairly homogeneous large group, or of several smaller groups, differing culturally from each other but drawn together by political, economic or residential ties. Thus Ngoni culture as described in this book could be regarded as that of a small group within the Ngoni kingdom and within Ngoni villages where other people of differing cultures were to be found. A number of references were made in this study to the cultural differences within Ngoni villages in spite of the proximity of living conditions. We find the same kind of situation in many countries today, whether those of a western way of living or a non-western. The French Swiss in Switzerland for example are a distinct cultural group within the Swiss nation, and they are divided into the sub-cultural groups of Protestants and Catholics, each with a characteristic way of living which shows itself not only in differences of religious belief.

As we look round the world we see societies, even nations or parts of nations like the French Swiss, trying to hold on either to their total culture, or to those parts of it such as language, religion, forms of family life, distinctive dress and food, which seem to them to have special significance for them and their children. No cultures, or virtually none, are unaffected by modern changes brought about by political, economic or social influences and forces. And there are societies and nations anxious to change their culture in order to bring it into line with the demands of modern, mainly western, life. The educationist who is aware of other systems than his own soon realises that an education system and what is taught in it can be used to change culture, or to perpetuate certain elements in it. This attempt to balance

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● 121 the forces of cultural change and cultural continuity through the education of a people is found all over the world today.

The concept of culture as a way of living, and of a specific society or social group practising that way of living, has many implications for those who are thinking about education at the present time. Readers of this book, especially those in western countries, who are unaccustomed to the ideas and language of anthropology, may find some difficulty in relating what they have thought of as principles of education to the aims and methods of the Ngoni in bringing up their children. This difficulty arises for two main reasons. One is that we in the west have to stretch and widen our ideas about education, and burst the classroom walls in our effort to see children growing up in a total culture and not only inside the limits of formal schooling. The other reason also demands an effort of imagination, for we in the west have got to appreciate and understand the differences between the growing up of children in the tight little family of father, mother and children living a separate existence in a town house or flat, and children growing up in the larger family and circle of relatives, creating family life in the wider sense used in this Ngoni study. The first kind of family life is characteristic of our urban industrial society, the second of rural life in most of the rest of the world and in many aspects of urban life in eastern and African countries as well.

The inevitable sequel, or at least it should always follow, to thinking about education as either changing a people's culture or helping to perpetuate parts of it, is to look at the effect on individual children and their growth and development. This concentration on individual development has so far been the main preoccupation of educational study in the west, and many questions arise, as was suggested in the introduction, about the effect, for example, of certain Ngoni methods of training on the development of individuals. Perhaps all students of education, and most administrators and planners too, have to ride a see-saw between adapting

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education to the needs of society and adapting it to the needs of individual children. There is as we all know no final choice possible. Some kind of synthesis is essential, and the balance is always swinging first in one direction and then in another. And here parents, their views on education and their methods of training children in their homes, have a supremely important role to play, almost a controlling role, since they can work in with the aims of formal schooling or persistently try to counteract them.

Where this study might lead

'Growing up among the Ngoni' is only one of several studies of growing up in non-western societies. The societies described from this angle of child-training differ from each other structurally and culturally, but there are common elements in the studies of growing up which should be of interest, in western and non-western countries alike, to teachers and parents and all who are concerned about how children are in fact growing up, and the role of formal schooling in this process.

One of the dominant notes in modern psychological advice to young parents and to teachers is the emphasis on security for the young child. It is worth while looking at the early years of Ngoni children from this angle, and perhaps using other studies of growing up as well, examining the kind of security provided by a wide circle of relatives all living round the child's home, and all ready to meet the child's needs; and then comparing this form of security with the dependence of a young child on its mother only, which is characteristic of most small families in western urban societies.

There is another aspect of the security of Ngoni children, found too in several other growing up studies, and that is the freedom conferred on a child because he learns early in life just how to speak and how to behave to other people. This may be an unusual view of the apparent restrictions placed on language, posture, attitude, actions, displayed by a child

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155 particularly towards adults. Anyone who has brought up children however knows that they are unhappy with unlimited licence in behaviour, and is aware that the learning of etiquette and manners and obedience, apparently so tiresome in its early stages, does eventually eliminate a number of perplexing choices for children, and by regulating certain relationships confers freedom in other directions. That was my reading of the Ngoni children's reactions to the somewhat formal code of manners taught from their early years and strictly enforced. Ngoni good manners did not mean that the children were coerced and subdued. They were happy, busy, friendly, helpful, endlessly inventive and full of initiative. I suggested here and there in the book that they had various outlets in the middle years of childhood for [154] aggression, jealousy, frustration. There was very little evidence of neurotic tendencies, and, except in certain instances mentioned, there was little apparent inclination to avoid social mixing with age-mates or with other groups and the obligations inherent in such mixing.

The seeming absence of frustration and overt rebellion in the years just after puberty was due to the social recognition by relatives and by the village community of the new stage reached by boys and girls, and to the increasing responsibility required of them for carrying out allotted tasks and for preparing for their future careers. There was no doubt that the outlet for youths of emigration from the villages to work for wages in the south provided a much-needed opportunity at a critical moment in their late teens. In the same way the stimulus of modern schooling, depending on the area and the type of schools in it, helped older boys and girls to look forward to further opportunities of work, of interests, and of escape from the too intimate control of their family and kinship circle and village elders.

● 121 Another line to be followed in these growing-up studies is the actual pattern of relationships between the parents and the children, the parents and their circle of relatives, the

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parents and the community, the children and the community, and the community and the school. There are a number of clues to follow in examining the different groups of people involved in a child's growing up, and discovering some kind of consistent pattern of relationship between them. The clues are not difficult to trace for they begin in such information as the amount of time a child spends with each group, what he learns from each group, how much authority and responsibility the group assumes for him, and so on. In this analysis it is not enough to relate each group to the children. It is important too to be aware of the personal relations between parents, relatives, community, school authorities, in terms of their opportunities for mutual contact and discussion, and their attitude towards culture change and cultural conservation. Out of such potential contacts arise the formulation of aims for home and school training, and their harmony or their conflict, and the resultant effects on the growing up of a child.

These two lines to be followed up, which we have just indicated, are familiar to most teachers and to many parents. The third line arising out of this study, and common to most other studies of growing up, is related to research on personality and culture and on national character. This field of studies is more controversial and more complex than the former. In the case of the Ngoni they had a more or less distinct ideal personality rooted in their culture and answering the question: what kind of people are the Ngoni and how do they want others to regard them? This ideal personality was the goal of their child-training as described in this book, but it was in the process of being modified by school teaching, by Christian teaching, and perhaps more profoundly still by the growth of Nyasaland African nationalism. The sharp outlines of the ideal personality type of Ngoni men and women were already blurred by these political and educational developments.

For readers of this book the relevance of this aspect of

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157 Ngoni children's growing up is probably to call attention to cultural and national influences in emphasizing certain qualities in the ideal personality and in individual character.

In general, in the west, cultural influences determining
● 121 a way of life, and setting standards for individual behaviour are found in certain kinds of 'class' grouping, or in the environmental determinants of rural communities, 'new' towns and housing estates, slum or suburban areas. Very few western societies can show their children the sharp outline of an ideal personality which seemed so important and compelling to the Ngoni. Nevertheless behind parents' attempts to train their children or to direct their growing up lie as a rule some vague ideas about ideal personality traits or the qualities to be looked for in national character. Perhaps some searching into these fundamental motives, stimulated by this Ngoni study, could help to bring them to the surface and so assist in the harmonizing of educational aims.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was first drafted to supply information on Ngoni marriage to the African Marriage Survey organized by the International African Institute and the International Missionary Council. It is based on inquiries made in the field while I was on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. My fieldwork would have been impossible without the generous co-operation and assistance of many friends, European and African; I hope to be able to mention them by name in a later publication. However I must here acknowledge my debt to Mr. M. B. Lukhero, for help with this inquiry; to Professor Gluckman and my colleagues of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, for comments on this paper in draft; to Miss B. Pole for secretarial assistance; and to my wife for help in the field and in writing up.

Professor Schapera has kindly pointed out that my use of the term 'band' for a group of wives is likely to cause confusion, as this word has other technical uses in anthropology. He has suggested the term 'bevy' in lieu. It has not been possible to make the change in this paper, but readers should substitute 'bevy' for 'band' throughout.

J. A. Barnes

London, June 1950

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INTRODUCTION

MARRIAGE among the Ngoni is much the same as anywhere else. It establishes a relationship between a man and a woman, regulates their sexual activities, locates their children in the kinship system and influences the inheritance of their property. These general features, however, do no more than define and identify marriage, and distinguish marriage from concubinage. Our task is to analyse the particular features that distinguish Ngoni marriage from other marriage systems and to relate marriage to other institutions and social processes in Ngoni society.

In Ngoni history there has always been marriage. Indeed men and women look back longingly to a past when people married properly and decorously, and when adulterers were killed, and bemoan the promiscuity of the present when no woman's fidelity is certain. Yet even now old people still expect their juniors to marry and their expectations are fulfilled. Adults are assumed to be married, and the assumption is justified.

Marriage is seen by the Ngoni as part of the natural order. Unmarried adults cannot fill important roles and are regarded as overgrown children whose anomalous condition must be explained by reference to a malady or a physical or moral defect. Yet despite the universal and permanent character of marriage as an Ngoni institution there have been, in the course of the hundred and thirty years which constitute Ngoni history, great changes in the procedures and implications of marriage and in its relations to other aspects of the social life of which it is a part. These changes have been paralleled in other Ngoni institutions, in law, in local organization, in religion and above all in political structure. In this paper we shall attempt to contrast the institution of marriage as seen at two stages in Ngoni history and to relate it to the general plan of social life at these two periods. We shall also discuss some of the processes of change that have brought about the differences we observe and which to some extent are still at work in contemporary Ngoni society.

It is convenient to compare marriage as it was during the 1890's and as it is at the present day. The information relating to the earlier period is contained only to a slight extent in contemporary documents,[1] and consists largely in the recollections of older men and women as recorded by a number of writers from 1914 onwards. The

[1] The most important of these are Wilson's articles, 'Expedições portuguesas a M'Pesène (1889)', in *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, x (1891) pp. 338-73, 331-430, 468-97, and xi (1892) pp. 373-500. (All page references cited are from Vol. X); and 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der Zulu im Norden des Zambesi, namentlich der Angoni,' *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xxxii (1900), pp. 181-200.

information is insufficient for any reconstruction in great detail, but the general principles are clear and to some extent our conclusions can be checked by reference to material from other areas, particularly the nineteenth century accounts of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland and the Zulu. The account of present-day marriage is based on information collected in the field during 1946-9.[1]

The period of the 1890's is chosen for comparison with the present because of the catastrophic change in Ngoni life which occurred in 1898 when they were defeated by the British. Old people who were alive during the period are still available for questioning and many younger people have been told of those times by their parents and grandparents. Although Ngoni cannot generally remember beyond their grandparents, genealogies collected now yield some information about the 1890's and link that period to the present. Important social changes occurred in 1898, changes which for the greater part were, and still are, regretted by the Ngoni, and these accentuate the difference between time present and time past. The past is recollected and recounted and has a moral value. Children are taught the glories of the past to compensate them for the inadequacies of the present. The teaching of tribal history as a school subject reinforces this view. With the passage of time the past has been idealized and simplified but the picture is still clear enough for us to be able to distinguish probable fact from unlikely rationalization. Marriage in 'the time of peace', as the period prior to 1898 is called, is one aspect of this picture.

Marriage is one part of kinship, for it is by the twin processes of marriage and childbirth that the web of kinship is spun. For the purposes of our analysis we have had to sever marriage from its context in what may appear at times rather an arbitrary fashion. A society is a whole, if not always a well integrated whole, and no one part of it can be fully understood without a simultaneous knowledge of all its other parts. Societies persist, more or less, through time, and it is clear that we cannot hope to grasp the total significance of the working of a society at any one time without a knowledge of the changes or lack of change in that society both before and after. Yet we cannot marshal all these relationships simultaneously, let alone present them through the medium of words. Our attempt to comprehend the present cannot wait until we have full knowledge of the future, and our analysis of one sector of a system must proceed in advance of our synthesis of the whole. Ngoni society has persisted through the last sixty years rather less than most, and it may well be argued that present-day Ngoni society is poorly integrated. Nevertheless it is to be hoped that an analysis of Ngoni marriage may, on the one hand, demonstrate

[1] I made two visits to the Fort Jameson Ngoni while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, spending in all a year and eight months there. I was assisted by my clerk, Mr. M. B. Lekhaza, in inquiring into former conditions as well as observing contemporary social life.

that despite the vicissitudes of history there is some unbroken but continually changing system of social relationships which we may call Ngoni social structure, and that there is therefore some point in comparing Ngoni marriage in the 1890's with Ngoni marriage to-day; and on the other hand may prepare the way for a broader analysis of Ngoni kinship, of which marriage is one part.

The Fort Jameson Ngoni, with whom alone we are concerned in this paper, differ considerably from the other Ngoni groups in Africa and there is evidence that there are differences in marriage arrangements even from the nearby groups in Northern and Southern Nyasaland. The Fort Jameson Ngoni, numbering about 85,000, live in the Fort Jameson District of Northern Rhodesia and in the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District of Nyasaland. Their country stretches from 13°25'S to 14°S latitude and from 32°10'E to 35°15'E longitude. Like other Ngoni groups they have a history of migration from Natal at the time of the rise of the Zulu under Shaka in the 1820's. They arrived at their present abode in about 1870 and were conquered by British troops in 1898. The leader of the group was Mpezeni I, and the present Paramount Chief, Mpezeni III, is his son's son's son. There are ten county chieftainships in Northern Rhodesia and two in Nyasaland, and each chief has his own court. The people live by subsistence cultivation, with maize as the main crop. A little maize and some cattle are sold to the local European-owned tobacco farms and in the township of Fort Jameson, but the principal source of money income is work on the farms or at the urban centres of Southern Rhodesia and the railway line of Northern Rhodesia. Many women and almost all men have been to Southern Rhodesia at some time or other[1].

[1] For an outline account of the social structure of this group, see Barnes, 'The Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 194 - 221 in Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman, eds., *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, London, Oxford University Press, 1951.

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Succession to office within this system was from a man to his eldest son by his great wife. A man inherited from his father not only his father's dependents but also his father's political superiors. The segments of the system, although some of them had special names, could all be referred to by the name of the person in charge of each segment. The heir succeeded to the name of his father and to responsibility for the segment named after his father. New people came into the system in two ways: by birth and by capture. Captives were placed in the system by decree of the Paramount Chief and his regional governors. The function of marriage was, in this context, to locate children in the system unambiguously and uniquely.

Two systems of relationships set up ties which cut across the lines of the residential system. These were the military regimental system of age-sets and the bilateral kinship system. In this paper we shall be concerned only incidentally with the regimental system, in so far as it directly affected marriage. We are, however, concerned with the kinship system, and in particular with the relationship of husband and wife. By careful choice of wives for himself and his sons a man ensured that his own group of agnates was linked to many other agnatic groups by bonds of affinity and, in the next generation, of matrilateral kinship.

It is from this point of view that we can best approach the analysis of marriage as it was in 'the time of peace'. Marriage arrangements then worked in conjunction with the residential system which is now in decay and it is not surprising that the replacement of the old system by a new one has been accompanied by changes in the kinds of marriage entered into by Ngoni men and women.

2. *Fidelity and fertility*

The old Ngoni residential system had much in common with the Zulu and Swazi systems and there was much in common in the realm of marriage. Marriage involved a permanent transfer of the fertility of the woman to the man's group. The children of a man's wife fell entirely within his own segment of the system, so that political ties became coincident with lineage ties. But while marriage secured for a man legitimate descendents with whom to people his own segment, it also established ties of affection and obligation which cut across the cleavage lines of the residential system. A man and his affines were linked in a specific relationship, entailing definite rights in division in the marriage, validated by the transfer of cattle and made permanent by the birth of children. The rites of marriage affirmed the transfer of the woman's fertility, the agnatic affiliation of her children, and the rights and obligations of affines towards one another. This pattern is common to many peoples organised patrilineally. Nevertheless, some of the characteristics of highly developed agnatic systems, such as ghost marriage, the marriage of wives by a woman, and the marriage of a queen with cattle contributed by the whole nation, were not found among the Ngoni.

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CHAPTER II

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

1. *White conquest*

THE SOCIAL system which we have so far described flourished in an environment in which the Ngoni people were separated from other tribes by a no-man's-land. Ngoni raiding parties crossed this tract and returned with captives, food and some cattle. The only other contacts with the outside world were with Arab slave-traders and their agents who exchanged slaves and ivory for cloth and guns, and with a few white and half-caste traders and explorers. In 1898 the Ngoni army was defeated by a force under British leadership and many villages were burnt down. Very many of the cattle were looted and the people dispersed. A White township was built in the middle of the Ngoni kingdom, the warriors were disarmed, and an administrative system was established involving both Whites and Ngoni. Missionaries arrived, schools were opened, labour recruiters and later tobacco planters began their activities.

We are not concerned here with the total effect of this sequence of events but only with the results it has had on marriage. We can distinguish a number of fields in which processes initially external to the indigenous society began to impinge on it and to become part of it. The establishment of White control brought to an end the Ngoni wars. The building up of the Cewa chieftainships contiguous to Ngoni country affected the whole scheme of values held by Ngoni people at the same time as those values were being altered by the intrusion of White technology, political offices, legal concepts, and religions. The physical dispersion of the people in the face of the British troops was followed by a greater dispersion of men, and later of women and children as well, over the mining centres of Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt.

The large villages which formed the core of the residential system were burnt, and their inhabitants never all came together again. At first people lived in small settlements of three or four grass shacks built in the hills or in the bush. Gradually the people gathered together in distinct villages, but their population was different in structure from that of the former villages. The groupings of people which stayed together after 1898 represented the smallest fragments of the residential system, and those small fragments collected together into larger associations which were related to, but by no means coincident with, the larger segments of the old system. Some segments left the area and rejoined the tribes from whence they

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CHAPTER III

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

1. The field of modern marriage

581 MARRIAGE nowadays among the Ngoni still regulates the sexual activities of man and wife and determines the responsibility for the care of their young children, the inheritance of their property, and succession to office. To a lesser extent it still determines residence and establishes relationships between a partner to the marriage and his or her affines. It is an institution which involves sooner or later almost every Ngoni man or woman who survives into adulthood. The number of people who die adult and [206] unmarried is very small. Even albinos, who are regarded generally with disgust, usually succeed in marrying. The only people who 589 fail to marry at all are: seriously crippled people who are regarded as not strong enough to look after themselves; a few prostitutes who [548] acquire a reputation for wantonness before they have managed to find a husband and who live in a succession of temporary alliances with men in and around the township of Fort Jameson; and a category of persons known as 'quite useless people',[1] that is, people [828] who are mad or in some way deranged so that they are unable to settle down in any place and are always wandering about from village to village, begging shelter, beer and food.

A man who does not marry, or who remains divorced or widowed for many years, is regarded as unusual, and others say of him that he must smell like a he-goat so that no woman will have him. A man in his twenties without a wife is laughed at by the married women, who despise him as impotent. Very few men in fact stay long without a wife, and of people whose personalities are regarded as normal it is only a few old widowers who do not have a wife to cook for them and sleep with them. Some women stay for longer [10] without a husband, partly because of the numerical preponderance of women over men caused by labour migration.

128 Some idea of the extent to which marriage affects everyone sooner or later is given by Tables III and IV. These tables, like all the others in this paper, are based on information collected systematically •181 from six Ngoni villages. Two of these villages, containing 257 and 142 residents, situated twenty-five miles apart and in different counties, were selected for me to live in by the county chiefs concerned. The remaining four villages containing 143, 104, 55 and 45 [501] residents, were close together but in a third county and twenty miles away from the other two.

[1] Chiliv, pl. viviliv, or chiv Gwanda Gwiyolinyoda. Cf. Nkenga viv, pl. mavilv, idiot.

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away from the other two. They were the four most accessible from my base camp, built at a site chosen by the Administration. I was able to compare their size, history, and kinship structure with those of many other villages I visited, and as far as I could tell they were in these respects fairly typical Ngoni villages. They form a sample of approximately one per cent of the whole of the Fort Jameson Ngoni.

The tables in which the units are individuals or extant marriages (III, IV, IX, X, XIII and XIV) are based on the marital histories of the men and women normally resident in those villages during the latter part of 1948, in one village, and during the earlier part of 1949 in the other five. In Tables I, II, V to VIII, XI and XII, where the units are marriages and not individuals, I have drawn on the histories of men and women who lived in these villages as wedded people for at least part of the time from 1946 to 1949. I endeavoured to interview the whole population but failed to do so for various reasons. I was however, able to determine who was, and who was not, a resident in these villages, and can therefore indicate the number of people who could have been included in this six-village sample had more been known about them. Some of my interviews were only partial.

In Tables V to VIII, which deal with the incidence and magnitude of marriage payments, each marriage is classified by the decade in which it began. This is not necessarily the decade in which the payment was made, for as we have noted payments are sometime made after many years of marriage. Unfortunately I do not have enough information to classify by the decade of payment.

In the tables I have used the word 'wedded' to refer to all people who had ever been married, whether or not they were currently married at the time of inquiry.

It will be seen from Table III that in this sample there was no unwedded man over the age of twenty-four, and, out of a total of 116 wedded men, there were only one widower and seven men whose last marriage had ended in divorce and who had not remarried. From Table IV we see that there was only one unwedded woman over the age of nineteen, but that there were as many as 31 widows who had not remarried. Only about a half, 122 out of 223, of the wedded women were living with their husbands.

Marriage is then an experience that sooner or later comes to nearly every man or woman, although not every adult lives all the time in a simple family of procreation. Nevertheless, the ties forged by marriage remain, and the results of marriage extend beyond the wedding ceremony and beyond the domestic association of man and wife. It is the sexual activities of individuals that are most closely regulated by the fact of marriage. In succession to office and wealth, marriage, as we shall see, plays nowadays a permissive rather than a determining role. It is only by means of the symbolic acts which form part of marriage that a man can be reasonably sure of acquiring rights over his wife and the custody of his children. Yet he may,

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CHAPTER V

SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

1. Old and new marriage

WE HAVE described marriage at two periods in Ngoni history, as it was in the 1890's and as it is now. The differences we have found between the two periods are not due to chance except in the sense in which we may speak of all historical incidents as being partly due to chance and partly determined by the limiting conditions imposed by the past. Changes in the field of Ngoni marriage have been paralleled by changes in other aspects of Ngoni social life, have been influenced by other changes and have in turn influenced them. Throughout Ngoni history men and women have always married, but the society in which they married has changed. Marriage in the time of peace was appropriate, more or less, to the general ordering of social life in those days, and modern marriage is appropriate, again more or less, to the social structure of today.

Our task is then a threefold one. We have to show the relationship between old marriage and the rest of the old society, a similar relationship between modern marriage and modern society, and the process by which the transition from one set of conditions to the other has come about. We have outlined in Chapter II some of the internal and external factors responsible for this transition, and the nature of the material available to us on the 1890 period has led us, in Chapter I, to describe the old system largely in analytic terms. In this chapter we shall attempt to clarify our picture of the past in the light of an analysis of modern marriage.

In the old days the residential system provided the framework for political and lineage ties. Marriage was a legitimate means whereby children were recruited into segments of the system. Marriage involved a permanent transfer of fertility from the woman's kin to her husband's kin. Adultery was punishable by death, and divorce was rare. Affinal ties cut across the cleavage lines of the residential system, but while these ties were important, a man could not transfer his allegiance to his wife's or to his mother's group. A man who quarrelled with his kinsmen could not move to another village to live, but could only hive off to form a dependent but recognizable cluster of his own, which still remained part of the same residential segment.

The material apparatus belonging to the system, that is, the great villages with hundreds of huts and central cattle byres, was to a large extent destroyed in 1898 by the British. A few important people in the system were killed, and many of the cattle looted. With the establishment of British rule, it was physically possible for the

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But we know from other areas 121●
that loss of sovereignty itself does not necessarily disrupt the marriage arrangements of common people and we must look elsewhere for an explanation.

2. Movement between villages

The old villages formed part of the residential system, and their 621
structure was maintained by the power of the central chieftainship, as expressed through the lieutenants of the royal villages, and by the diffuse sanction of public opinion based on ideas held in common as to the rights conferred by the payment of bridewealth. Nowadays [178]
the lieutenants of the royal villages have very much less power, and bridewealth is not often paid. The village is held together by the various ties of kinship and affinity between its members, and to a slight extent by the restriction of movement from one village to another. This control, exercised by the Administration through the [648]
system of registration of adult males, is largely ineffective except in the Resettlement Areas.[1] Men and women are more or less free to live wherever they can find relatives, and if they quarrel in one village they can move to another where they hope life will be more pleasant. There is no general rule to which appeal can be made concerning whether a married couple should live uxorilocally or virilocally. Hence a quarrel between man and wife or between affinally related people may lead to a split in the village, and the dissident section may attempt to form a village of its own or attach itself to another village. It is therefore in the interests of the [620]
headman that quarrels in his village should be settled as rapidly as possible, and he has therefore an interest in the private lives of his people even though they may not be his close relatives. His interests are represented by his lieutenants and are shared by everyone in the village who wishes his own to be a large prosperous and happy village. The theme of the good and happy village recurs in many [173]
of the formal situations of Ngoni life and finds expression in much of local action on a village basis, as for example in the competitive dances, the division of food at a ceremony and the organization of the religious sects.

We find therefore that the headman and his lieutenants participate [620]
in the ceremonies of marriage and in marital quarrels. Conversely the headman is brought into relationship with the married couple by the allocation to him of pots of beer whenever there is a general distribution even though he may not be at the ceremony. Other important men and women similarly participate merely because of their common membership of the village. For example, a hoeing party was led by a middle-aged woman who was described as 'an important person' in the son-in-law's village. She was in fact

[1] Areas which have been reopened to settlement by Ngoni and other tribes since 1941 with various restrictions on agricultural methods and on population. About ten per cent of Ngoni live in Resettlement Areas.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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as well as to her husband and his kin, while a man tries to enlist the support of his own kin but not usually of his wife's kin if the dispute has nothing to do with marital affairs. At birth and death the division of labour and responsibility is mainly on sex lines. In general we may say that the elementary family does not emerge as a grouping of importance because there is no system of elementary families in which it can do so. Village is posed against village in dances, songs, the collection of tax, hunts, division of food, and so on. In other situations, one group of kinsmen act as a body in distinction to another group of kinsmen who are their affines. We have demonstrated this for the ceremonial situations of marriage and for the resolution of quarrels. In the intimacies of the hut, man and wife are in a simple and specific dyadic relationship which does not admit of substitution. To some extent, their infant, from conception to weaning, is a helpless appendage of this relationship. From weaning on, children acquire other social relationships of their own. The distinction drawn between marriage and the care of children is well illustrated by the remark made by an old widow when I asked her why she did not marry again. She replied 'I am now too old for marriage. My job is to look after children.' The missions encourage men and women to bring up and care for their own children, particularly where the children's grandparents are pagan. At the same time the importance of the economic ties that link every Ngoni household with the rest of the world is increasing and it is easier for men to find extra money when they are young and middle-aged than when they become grandparents. These two factors may lead to an increase in the importance of the elementary family, but it is also possible that the number of children sent home from Southern Rhodesia to their grandparents may grow as more women go there to join their husbands, thus increasing the responsibilities of the old towards their young grandchildren.

9. *Kinship structure, marriage payments and divorce*

We have seen that whereas in the old days divorce was infrequent, it is now comparatively common. We have also seen that prior to 1898 the kinship structure of the Ngoni was based on localized agnatic and quasi-agnatic lineages, for the captor-captive relationship was similar to that between father and child. These lineages are now no longer effective social groups, and individuals act and live together with cognates and affines related to them in a variety of ways. This parallel change in divorce frequency and in kinship structure provides confirmation for the hypothesis put forward by Gluckman that divorce is rare and difficult in tribes organized on a system of marked father-right, and frequent and easy to obtain in other types.[4] This hypothesis was suggested by a comparison of different tribes which Gluckman divides into two types. Among

[4] Gluckman, op. cit., p. 190.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

others, the Zulu and Nuer have agnatic lineages and rare divorce, while the Lozi and Ila lack agnatic lineages and have frequent divorce. The Ngoni before 1898 appear to belong to the first type and the Ngoni of the present-day to the second. In 'the time of peace' the fertility of the married woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth to her husband's lineage segment, and the children whom she produced were recruits to that segment. Her agnates could never claim the children for their matrilateral segment. Associated with this system were the levirate, the sororate, and the right to enforce betrothal on pain of the return of gifts. The simple legal family was a relatively stable unit, and its position within the lineage segment was determined rigidly by the ranking of co-wives. Divorce was rare and could be effected only on the initiative of the husband. By contrast the affiliation of children nowadays is not fixed, and the very groups themselves to which they would formerly have attached themselves are no longer important. The children borne by a woman, whatever marriage payments have or have not been made for her, are potential recruits to local kin groups led by a variety of different relatives. Compared with the past, the simple legal family is unstable and divorce is frequent and easy. As might be expected, the levirate and sororate and enforceable betrothal, the trappings of the old system, have declined in importance.

Gluckman also suggests that in general, marriage payments fall in value with the decreasing dominance of patrilineal descent, although he cites the Ila as a virilocal people with high marriage payments, no agnatic lineages and frequent divorce. He regards the influence of property on marriage payments as secondary, but writes: 'On this hypothesis, which needs more testing, the amount of goods transferred and the divorce rate tend to be directly associated, but both are rooted in the kinship structure. It is rare divorce which allows high marriage payment, rather than high marriage payment which prevents divorce.'[1] The Ngoni material suggests that payments, kinship structure and divorce frequency are connected and that among them, as among the Ila, frequent divorce does not preclude high payments.

We may distinguish three phases in the history of Ngoni marriage payments. Prior to 1898 bridewealth varied in amount from one to a dozen beasts, depending on the status of the woman's father. In addition, recently captured women were married, both by men of high and low status, without payment of cattle. There is no indication that divorce was any less rare in one section of the community than another. In our pre-1898 sample, as set out in Table I, only one marriage out of eighteen ended in divorce, despite the absence of payments in half the marriages. It is true that in the single instance of divorce there were no marriage payments, yet even this marriage does not suggest marital instability as we

[1] Gluckman, op. cit., pp. 192, 200.

rights at all. The payment of bridewealth had in the past enabled affinally related groups of kin to 'foresee the behaviour of one another in given situations since the payments evoke the behaviour'[10] but now the given situations were unlikely to occur. We may say then in this second phase poverty and uncertainty about the overall system of social relationships within which marriages would continue caused marriage payments to be low and, in some instances, non-existent.

The gradual increase in power of the Native Authority and the contemporaneous increased participation in the money economy have brought about further changes in the third phase, beginning round about 1930. In recent years the value of the legalization payment has increased and seems likely to increase further. This change is demonstrated in Table VII, although we must recall that the time classification in this table is by year of marriage, not year of payment. Similar increases have been noted among other Eastern Province tribes, notwithstanding cultural differences between them and the Ngoni. This increase has been possible because of the rise in wages and prices, but we cannot regard this as the sole cause. This simple hypothesis is ruled out by the simultaneous fall in bridewealth, as suggested by Table VI. While wages have risen, the rights associated with bridewealth have declined in importance and those associated with the legalization payment have remained significant. A high payment gives each particular marriage the mark of stability, yet at the same time the process which enables a young man to offer as much as £10 for his bride without appealing to his kinsmen for help has also made his expectation of life-long marriage with her less than it would have been thirty years ago, when he would have offered only 6s. Men earn money in Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt. They move freely between urban and rural environments, using the money to make large marriage payments in the villages. They stand on their own, do not call on their senior agnates for help, marry where they will, and settle with that headman whose village most attracts them or is most conveniently situated for siting a new shop. Yet if in this way they can free themselves from prescribed affiliation to a kin group, so can their children do the same. The former structural basis for stable marriage, the invariable affiliation of children to their agnatic group, has gone. There is as yet no system of law and morals, nor sufficient interest in inheritable property, to provide an alternative means of stablizing marriage. As among the Ila, high marriage payments accompany frequent divorce.

The hypothesis that increased frequency of divorce among the Ngoni is due mainly to the breakdown of their agnatic system may be supported by comparison with the Zulu and other Natal tribes. Here the old system, characterized by strong agnatic affiliation and

[10] *Ibid*, p. 172.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

rare divorce, has survived despite loss of sovereignty, territorial dispersal, economic impoverishment, high incidence of labour migration, and frequent adultery and illegitimacy.[11] The Ngoni, subjected to similar external processes, but in addition surrounded by matrilineal peoples and themselves largely of matrilineal origin, have lost their agnatic affiliation and, with it, stable marriage.

It is difficult to see exactly where this trend will lead. The third phase, as I have characterised it, is a recent development. There does not seem to have been any sharp rise in marriage payments until the 1939-45 war. During the war many Ngoni men earned higher wages than ever before in the Army and in industry. It may have been this that was decisive in raising the level of payments. It will be remembered that the thirty shillings minimum for the legalization payment was fixed by law during the war. It may, however, be suggested that if it is hoped by raising the level of payments to achieve stability in marriage, this hope is in vain. Payments may rise if people are in a position to pay more. Higher wages permit higher marriage payments without necessitating further changes in economic life, but in fact these changes are already taking place. Money is needed for more clothes, more food, more education, as well as for higher marriage payments. Payments rise as Africans participate increasingly in the general money economy of Southern Africa. The more they participate, the less marriage is constrained by a kinship structure based on morally significant face-to-face relations between agnates. The higher payments rise the more frequent becomes divorce. This is not a long-term prognosis, for I have indicated above that affiliation is not the only possible determining factor, and it is clear that if more people align themselves with those missions which do not permit divorce, the frequency of divorce as a whole may decline. There are other possibilities, but it seems to me unlikely that any of these other social mechanisms will become effective quickly; therefore the most probable concomitant of a rise in marriage payments in the immediate future is more frequent divorce.

Thus we see that at least for the Ngoni, changes in the amount and distribution of property have had a marked effect on the level of marriage payments, and that this effect can to some extent be isolated from that due to changes in kinship structure and in divorce frequency.

10. Attempts to resist change

The major structural changes taking place in Ngoni society in the last fifty years have not come about entirely unopposed. The Administration, the missions, and the Ngoni people themselves have noticed from year to year how the old order was changing and with varying success have made attempts to control the direction of change.

[11] Cf. information from Kark cited by Gluckman, op. cit., p. 204, footnote 1

S: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni Lamba F08

PREFACE

The four papers reproduced here deal with a method of estimating land carrying capacities for human populations under African conditions and systems of land usage, and the application of this method to the study of practical problems. The method itself is based on Trapnell's work on the soils and agricultural systems of the Territory, and details of the method as applied in practice have largely been evolved in collaboration between him and the author, with material assistance from other members of the Agricultural Department.

The first paper gives an outline of the technique used in carrying out detailed studies of land problems in the Eastern and Western Provinces of Northern Rhodesia. The basic conceptions of land deterioration and population carrying capacity, the relation of Native land usage to the vegetation-soil unit and the factors involved in the estimation of critical densities, which are discussed in this account, have already been referred to in Trapnell's *Ecological Report on North-Eastern Rhodesia* (paras. 37–41, 79 and 302–26). The main emphasis in Trapnell's account, however, is on the land deterioration aspect, whereas in the present essay the subject is given fuller treatment from the population standpoint and in the light of recent work on the redistribution of populations.

The second paper consists of a report, submitted to Government in 1940, on a reconnaissance survey of conditions in the area of the Lamba Chief Mushiri. This survey was the first attempt to apply the conception of land carrying capacity and the method of estimation to the study of a specific practical problem. Shortly afterwards the method was applied, on a vastly greater and more detailed scale, to the resettlement of congested populations in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts of the Eastern Province. In 1943 further study was given to the whole proplem of the concentration of populations, including that of Mushiri's area, about the southern and eastern rim of the Copperbelt. In the interval a Government Land Commission had visited the area. This Commission reported that the predictions made in the original report were being rapidly fulfilled and recommended the immediate grant of additional land under controlled settlement. Resettlement of populations from Mushiri and other overcrowded chieftaincies was started in 1943 and all of the recommendations contained in the original report have now been carried out or are in process of completion (see Annual Reports of the Agricultural Department, 1943–6). It will be noted that the Vegetation-Soil units have been revised and that other factors in the method of estimation have been somewhat modified, as a result of greater knowledge, since the original pioneer survey was made.

The third paper is a report, presented to Government in October 1944, on the vexed question of the adequacy or otherwise of the native reserves

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in the Mkushi District and the additions which have from time to time been made to them. This study deals with two somewhat more complex systems, both in a state of change, in which *chitemene* and hoe cultivation methods are combined. The report was followed, after further study, by an annexure (not reproduced here as it contains little of general interest) giving details of the proposed land additions and population transfers, and precise suggestions for measures to improve land usage which might be carried out by Native Authorities. Most of these suggestions have been adopted by the Native Authorities concerned.

It will be realised that both the Mushiri and Mkushi reports are strictly reconnaissance surveys intended to define the nature and scope of specific problems, to indicate what immediate measures may be necessary, and to pave the way for further more detailed study and survey on the lines indicated in the first paper.

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The fourth paper gives a brief and general account of the resettlement work which has been carried out, or is in process of completion, in Northern Rhodesia. It, like the first paper, was written in reply to numerous enquiries as to the technique, methods and objects of resettlement. None of the papers was intended for publication at the time it was written, but it is thought that their presentation may be of some value as a contribution to the study of the relationship between the African and his land.

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The question of land usage and its relation to the available supply of land is, of course, only one aspect of the general problem of African development. The life of the African is so intimately bound up with his land that one may almost say that there is no problem concerning him which is purely agricultural; just as there are few problems which are purely administrative, political, sociological, medical or veterinary. All of these aspects are often intimately, sometimes inextricably, bound together as integral parts of the one common problem.

In recent surveys, of which it is hoped to publish an example shortly, sociologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute have co-operated closely with officers of the Agricultural Department in the study of specific aspects of a common problem. Extension of this co-operative method of approach offers the best hope for the solution of many of the problems of African land usage.

But such studies, to be of full practical value, must take into account the effects of changing conditions. The industrial and economic changes which are to be expected within the next decade will profoundly affect the whole structure of African life and will, to a very large extent, determine the pattern and speed of rural development.

Mazabuka,
6 November 1947.

W.A.

[p. iv]

low productivity and little power of recovery. Next, the weaker soils will be abandoned: such data as we have suggests that this stage is reached when grain yields fall below 200 lb. per acre in the normal season. The former cultivators of the abandoned land may then offer work in exchange for the food surplus still enjoyed by the holders of the stronger soils, or they may be entitled to a share of the surplus by virtue of kinship obligations. In this way a period of increasing pressure and accelerated erosion on the stronger and more fertile soils is brought about. These stages will commonly be accompanied by migration of able-bodied men to the centres of employment and the stage finally be reached when the area is dependent to a large extent on food purchased from outside sources.

In 1941 a study was made of a highly congested area in Fort Jameson District; the area of Mpezeni, Paramount Chief of the Ngoni. The chieftaincy was found to be 54,000 acres in extent and, after detailed survey, the carrying capacity for traditional Ngoni agriculture was estimated to be about 1,300 to 1,400 persons. A total of 7,700 people, between five and six times the carrying capacity, were supposedly living within the chieftaincy. In short, an area which, because of the high proportion of mountain country, had a critical density of only about 16 persons per square mile did in fact appear to be carrying over 90 to the square mile.

The main reasons for the continued survival of this population were found to be as follows:

(a) The time during which these conditions had existed (about 15 years) was not sufficient to show the full effects of this degree of land pressure.

(b) Great areas of hill country and dambos, which would not normally be cultivated, had been taken into cultivation. The almost incredible mountain cultivation on the Nyamfinsi range was, until recently, a startling spectacle. Use of dambo grassland for *fipoka* gardens had seriously reduced grazing and was a sore point with the cattle-loving Ngoni.

(c) Under extreme pressure the population had burst its bounds and an irresistible tide had inundated adjoining private land and unoccupied European farms. In addition, a missionary organization had permitted cultivation, on payment, on land owned by the mission. By these means the effective acreage had, in fact, been increased by almost 50 per cent.

(d) A very heavy burden had been thrown on the limited soils of high fertility and resistance to erosion, the only soils left in the original area still carrying moderately good crops. These soils, then in continuous cultivation, were feeding more than twice as many people as they would normally do.

(e) The Paramount Chief was importing from Nyasaland each year a considerable quantity of food for the use of his people.

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In demarcating the Reserves three assumptions were made; that populations would prove sufficiently fluid to adapt themselves to the altered circumstances and to attain an equitable distribution in relation to the available land, that artificial water supplies would be provided on a scale sufficient to allow of such a distribution and that improvement in methods of agriculture would be sufficiently rapid to compensate for land lost and to provide for increasing populations. However reasonable these assumptions may have been at the time, none has been verified by events. The boundaries of tribes and chieftaincies remained static, there was little or no migration from over-populated to under-populated areas and in one instance congestion was aggravated by immigration from outside the Territory. The systems of land usage tended to degenerate rather than to improve, partly owing to increasing pressure on the land and partly because of migration of the men to the centres of employment. It was assumed too that adequate agricultural and water development services would be provided, and it proved beyond the resources of the country to provide such services in time to meet the need.

As a result of these factors, some of which could not have been foreseen owing to the lack of adequate data at the time, and some of which, like the economic depression and its effect on territorial finances, were unpredictable, extreme maldistribution arose in some parts of the Reserves. By 1941 more than half of the people within the Native Reserves of the four districts were living under conditions of more or less acute land shortage in relation to the land needs of their traditional systems, and very considerable areas were in process of rapid degeneration.

There is now little point in discussing whether or not the application of measures for agricultural improvement could have solved the problems of over-concentration without transfer of populations. In all probability no measure which would have been practicable could have met the case. The agriculture of a people can be rapidly developed only if three factors are present together; the means, the incentive and the will. Throughout the area we are discussing these factors were and for that matter still are, to a large extent absent. Except for local concentrations of cattle among the Ngoni, Chewa and eastern Senga, stock are lacking or negligible in numbers. The only implements are the hoe and the axe. A high proportion of the able bodied men are away at work, and the main source of income is from local employment by Europeans or the fraction of the wages of migrant labour which returns to the villages. With one or two local exceptions there are no cash crops sufficiently remunerative to compete with the attraction of the labour centres or to act as an incentive and provide the means for agricultural improvement. Nor was there any will to adopt new, incomprehensible and laborious methods while great areas of land, formerly in the possession of the people, remained empty and unused. This psychological factor alone would have defeated, and where it was attempted did defeat, all efforts at agricultural improvement. In addition, throughout most of the cattle areas of the Eastern Province population concentrations had reached such a level that even the immediate general adoption of an advanced system

9: Allan C-I (1941)1949 FRS Ngoni FRS ●
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of mixed farming would not have solved the problem without the transfer of a considerable proportion of the people.

§ 2. *Recommendations of the Land Commission*

In 1941 a large part of the land held by the North Charterland Exploration Company in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts was acquired by Government, and in 1942 a Land Commission was appointed which included in its terms of reference the making of 'full provision for the agricultural requirements of the Natives'. This Commission recommended that some 5,600 square miles of unalienated Crown Land in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts, about 2,000 square miles in the Mkushi District and 4,800 square miles in the Ndola District, should be constituted Native Trust Land and made available for Native occupation.

§ 3. *The Problem of Resettlement*

The problem then resolved itself into making the best possible use of the additional land, and using it in such a way as to restore the population-land balance where this could be done. It was not, of course, possible, even if it had been desirable, to recreate the primary population-land pattern, but the grant of additional land gave an opportunity of creating a planned tertiary pattern to replace the arbitrary secondary pattern.

Such planning requires a detailed knowledge of the land and of the agricultural systems employed on it. Fortunately the basic knowledge had already been provided by the Ecological Survey of the Territory. The vegetation-soil method, evolved by Trapnell, provided a rapid and reliable means of land classification and, again on the basis of the work of the survey, a method of estimating approximate land carrying capacities for traditional African systems of usage was devised. Description of the vegetation-soil method of land classification will be found in the two reports of the Ecological Survey and notes on the factors involved in the estimation of land carrying capacities are given in the second of these reports.*

A complete description of the method of estimating land carrying capacities, as employed in the resettlement work, and examples of its application are given in the other papers in this series.

It is necessary to understand clearly what is meant by the terms 'land carrying capacity' and 'population-land balance', as they are used here. There is a very definite limit to the number of people any land area will support in perpetuity, if the population obtains its food only from within that area. This limit is fixed by certain natural characteristics of soil and

* *The Soils, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Western Rhodesia*, Lusaka: Government Printer, 15s. *The Soil, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Eastern Rhodesia*, Lusaka: Government Printer, 5s.

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni Lamba FQ8 Maravi FR4

climate and by the way in which the land is used. If the limit is exceeded *without a compensating change in the system of land usage* then a process of land degradation is set in operation and ultimately, unless food is obtained from outside the area, population must decline to the limit determined by natural conditions and the system of land use, or to a lower level. This limit, the maximum number of people that a given land area will maintain in perpetuity under a certain system of land usage, has been termed the 'carrying capacity' of the area *for that system*. It will be clear that the term can be used only in relation to a clearly defined system of land usage. Throughout these notes, when no statement to the contrary is made, the expression is used in relation to the traditional agricultural system of the tribes concerned. These systems, and the staple crops which go with them, vary greatly within this relatively small area of 33,800 square miles, and range from a primitive form of axe-agriculture among the Western Lala to comparatively advanced soil selection methods practised by the Eastern tribes. Descriptions of all of these systems will be found in the publications to which reference has already been made.

The term 'population-land balance' hardly requires definition. If the total population of an area is equal to or less than the land capacity for the system of agriculture practised, then a population-land balance exists within that area. When the total population is well below the land carrying capacity the areas may be described as under-populated.

These concepts, and the methods of survey and of estimating the carrying capacities for the different land categories and agricultural systems, were applied to the problem of resettlement. Rapid reconnaissance surveys were made throughout the populated areas, with the objects of assessing approximately the land carrying capacity for each chief's area and estimating the number of people who would have to be moved to unoccupied land in order to re-establish a population-land balance on the basis of the traditional agricultural systems. The estimate indicated that a total of about 160,800 people would have to be moved, as shown in the Table below.

District	*Tribe*	*Number of people to be moved*
Fort Jameson	Chewa	98,300
	Ngoni	
Petauke	Senga	35,000
	Ambo	8,000
Mkushi	Lala	3,200
	Swaka	4,300
Ndola	Lamba	12,000

The estimates make no allowances for the readjustment of population distribution within the old Reserves. Some chieftaincies were in fact much under-populated and in some of the Reserves considerable areas remained almost or completely uninhabited because of water shortage, the occur-

6:Ratray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

PREFACE BY THE REV. ALEXANDER HETHERWICK, D.D.

The author of the following book has been for some years located among the Nyanja-speaking tribes of British Central Africa at Blantyre, and afterwards in Central Angoniland. His occupation as a member of the African Lakes Corporation has brought him into close contact with the native population of these districts. He has taken advantage of his opportunities to familiarize himself with the native language, of which he has acquired a very competent knowledge. In the course of his studies he made a collection of native folk-lore and stories which illustrate in the fullest degree the various constructions, idioms and grammatical forms of the language. These he has now published with the coöperation of the Directors of the Corporation.

The book is of value as containing examples of native life, habits and customs which are rapidly disappearing from the country before the advance of civilization and the work of Christian missions. The coming generation of natives will grow up under new influences, and the habits of thought and belief that ruled the lives of their fathers will soon be forgotten. Collections of folk-lore such as this book contains are therefore invaluable for the light they throw on a state of native life that is rapidly passing away.

To get into the heart of the native mind is a task well-nigh impossible for a European. The nearest

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

approach is made through the media of such collections as the author of the following pages has made. For this reason the book is commended to all who are interested in the study of native African life and habits.

It is further to be commended for its illustrations of the Nyanja language in which the stories, etc., are written. This language is spoken over the greater part of British Central Africa, or Nyasaland Protectorate, and forms the chief means of communication between the natives of the various districts themselves, as well as between the European settlers and the native population around them. It seems likely to become also the *lingua franca* of the whole of the British possessions in Central Africa that border on the Nyasaland Protectorate. The student of this language will find no better way into the heart of the subject he is dealing with than through the medium of these native stories. To facilitate this use of them, a literal translation is added, and notes are appended illustrating and explaining such idiomatic constructions as would be likely to present difficulty to a learner.

The writer of this preface has no doubt but that the book will prove its usefulness to the student of the Nyanja tongue, as well as its interest to the student of native African life and thought.

ALEXANDER HETHERWICK.

BLANTYRE MISSION,
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA,
January 1, 1906.

6:Ratray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

In the study of this language, the student is for- 113
tunate in having two such scholarly works of reference as *A Practical Manual of the Nyanja Language*, by the Rev. A. Hetherwick, M.A., D.D., F.R.G.S., and *A Cyclopædic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language*, by the Rev. D. C. Scott, M.A., D.D., F.R.S.G.S.; on the other hand, there is a striking want of any good prose work in that language. Of 114
translations of the Bible, and other religious books, 121
there are many, but all such works, in the translation, follow the English text almost literally, and contain so many words from foreign sources as to be of little use to the student who, having mastered the grammar and syntax of the language, seeks to enlarge his vocabulary and knowledge of idiomatic expression by reading some prose work. (The ideal 121
translation of the Bible, or other religious work, would be one in which the English sentence is taken, the meaning got at, and this remodelled and transformed according to the native way of thought and expression.) It is to supply such a want that this little work is intended. The aim throughout has been, in the Chinyanja part, to write each sentence as a raw native would speak it. It is a commonly heard saying, that only boys trained at a Mission talk the language "grammatically." This is cor- 191
rect, if by "grammar" we mean a principle of set 184
rules for the speaking of a language. For to the uncivilized native any such rules as those governing our own, and other languages of civilized countries,

6.Rattray E.G-S (ca. 1900) 1907 Fi5 Ngoni FR5

are unknown, and he talks, "having regard rather to the poetical feeling than to the grammatical position and syntax of a word." But enclitics, tense particles, concords, the various forms of the verb (applied, causative, intensive, reversive, etc.), and all those auxiliary particles such as *ba*, *ka*, *ngo*, *dzi*, and enclitic particles such as *-nso*, *-be*, *-tu*, etc., by which all the finer shades of meaning are expressed, he uses absolutely correctly, and it is with a view of understanding, and making oneself understood, to the raw, uneducated element among these natives, that one should go to the trouble of learning this language.

The customs, stories, etc., recorded herein are those of the natives inhabiting Central Angoniland. They are descendants, for the most part through intermarriage with the Achewa, of the Zulus who came from south of the Zambesi, scattering as they advanced, under different leaders; those under *Gwaza* (the father of *Sakambewa*), and his *nduna Chiwere*, settling at Dowa; *Mpezeni*, a son of *Gwaza*, settling near Fort Jameson. *Mputa*, the father of *Chikusi*, after reaching as far as Lake Chirwa, and raiding the Anguru under *Sinjaubwereka*, came to Domwe, near Dedza, under promise of cattle from *Sosola*, a *Chipeta*, or *Nchewa* chief. (*Chipeta* and *Nchewa* are synonymous, the former word being a sobriquet bestowed on the *Achewa* who came on to the Angoniland plateau, by the *Achewa* who settled on the Lake shore, the latter referring to the former as the *achipeta*, i. e. they of the *chipeta* (long grass)). Intermingled with these customs, borrowed for the most part by the conquerors from the conquered, are to be found traces here and there, and here and there a word, which strike the key-note of their past history, now all but forgotten even by themselves. But what is of their

6:Rattray E.G-S (ca. 1900) 1907 FRS Ngoni FRS

past, and what of their present, will be clear to one who has made a more minute study of their Zulu ancestors than the writer had time or opportunity to do. Whatever be of merit in this little work, the writer owes to the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, D.D., to whose kindness and courtesy in teaching him Chinyanja, when he first came to the country, he owes all that is best in his knowledge of the language.

MANDALA,
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA,
January 1, 1906.

[X is blank]

7: Hodgson G-S (1926) 1933 FRS Ngoni FRS Maravi FR4

Livingstone found chief Mwase, at Kasungu, ruling over "a section of Mang'anja, called Machewa, or Rockites."

For some years the Achewa enjoyed a peaceful existence in their new home, keeping cattle, but living mainly by agriculture, until their tranquillity was disturbed by the Ngoni invasion and by the slave raids of the *Jumbe*[2] at Kota Kota. By these the eastern branch of Achewa was continually harassed; and consequently in 1860 Dundo, Kanyundo and others of the house of Kasungu moved south to the Kasungulwi and Mzimi Rivers, and in 1896 handed over this part of the country to the protection of the British Government.

The Angoni, under the name of Mazitu, were described by Livingstone as Zulus,[3] and this terminological error has been copied by more than one subsequent writer. Of their earlier wanderings no record has been traced. Owing, perhaps, to their lighter colour it has been surmised that they came from far up the east coast; but it is known that under the style of Ale-ngoni, derived from an ancient chief Ngoni, they were settled on the Drakensberg, a small tributary of the upper St. John's River, when the Ale-zulu first arrived in Natal about 1820.[4] In this locality they remained for a couple of centuries, till towards the end of his reign the notorious Zulu king Chaka fell upon their allies the Ama-ndwandwe under Zwide. A section of the Ale-ngoni then migrated northwards under Zwangendaba; and wherever they went they fought and subdued the peoples through whose country they passed, seizing cattle and incorporating captives in their own tribe. After raiding the Ale-nate, Ama-swazi, Ale-thonga[5] and Ama-kalanga, they crossed the Zambezi near Zumbo at the time of the total eclipse of the sun on the 19th of November, 1835,[6] and overran the territories of the Ale-nenge, A-tumbuka, A-nsefwa and A-mandewere till they came to the land of the Wa-fipa and Wa-rukwa.

How Zwangendaba (or Nsangaulewa, as he is generally called in Nyasaland) died, and his following broke up and scattered in different directions. While others advanced to the north and east, four sections turned back, one under Mombera to the Tumbuka country, another under Mpezeni to the Lunguwa river, the third under Chiwere to Dowa, and the fourth under Chikusi still further south. It is with the third section that we are now dealing. The hybrid nature of the Dowa Angoni can be inferred from the list of clans given in a subsequent section (IV, 2). During the last four decades they have intermarried still further with the Achewa, and there are now few, if any, pure-blooded Angoni in the district. Their paramount chief, Chiwere, though calling himself an Ilangoni, is in reality an Mlenge.

The general features, characteristics and habits of these peoples are akin to those of neighbouring tribes which have been described by the Reverend Duff Macdonald,[7] Miss Alice Werner

[1] D. and C. Livingstone: *loc. cit.*, pp. 530, 548.

[2] A coast Arab, acting as wali, or representative, of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

[3] D. and C. Livingstone: *loc. cit.*, p. 301.

[4] Eric A. Walker: *Historical Atlas of South Africa*, p. 8. J. H. Soga: *The South-Eastern Bantu*, pp. 61, *et seq.*

[5] In ph and th each consonant is pronounced. Similarly, in ou and ow each vowel is pronounced.

[6] E. H. L. Poole: *Journal African Society*, vol. xxix, No. cxv, p. 280.

[7] Rev. Duff Macdonald, *Africana*. Miss Alice Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa*. Dr. H. S. Stannus, *The Wagoo of Nyasaland*, Harvard African Studies III, *Yarin Africana* III, pp. 239-272, "Notes on Some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xl. 1910, pp. 285-305, etc., etc.

7: Hodgson . G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Maravi FR4

Dr. H. S. Stannus and other writers, and I have attempted, therefore, in the following pages to confine myself to matters which, so far as I know, have not been recorded fully elsewhere. The present tense is generally used, though in many instances, during forty years of contact with missionary and other European influence, the custom described may have fallen wholly or partially into desuetude. Except where otherwise stated, the notes may be taken as referring to the Chewa tribe.

II. Domestic Life: Marital.

1. *Mdulo.* (*Chewa*).

Mdulo (a noun derived from *ku-dula*, to cut or break off) is the causing of illness in oneself or another person by indulging in sexual intercourse at prohibited times or, more rarely, by abstaining therefrom when it is prescribed. The following are examples of cases in which the misfortune of *mdulo* is conferred:

(*a*) Upon a husband by his wife if he eats food into which she has put salt either during her periods or after she has committed adultery.

(*b*) Upon an unweaned child by its father—

(1) if he fails to achieve connexion after its birth (*vide infra* II, 7);

(2) if he commits adultery in his own house when the child is there;

(3) if he has connexion with his wife on the child's blanket when the child is sleeping in the house; or

(4) if he occupies the same house with two wives, and has connexion with the other in the temporary absence of the child and its mother.

(*c*) Upon an unweaned child by its mother if she leaves its *mbereko*[1] outside the house while she has intercourse and afterwards puts the child into it again. In the event of such a contretemps the *mbereko* must always be given away to someone else.

(*d*) Upon the womb of a wife by her husband—

(1) if he commits adultery when she is pregnant and then eats with her out of the same pot.

(2) When a man has two wives, he normally spends a week or two with each in turn. If, when one is pregnant, he leaves her for an abnormally long period, he must not return to her until after she has given birth, otherwise he will thereby "cut off" the womb. The result of this misadventure is that the wife will die in child-birth, or the child will be still-born or will die shortly after birth.

(*e*) Upon a boy in the *bwalo*[2] by his parents—

(1) when the boy comes to their house in their absence and helps himself to meat or food from a pot, if the parents have intercourse on their return and then give him meat from the same piece or food from the pot;

[1] *Mbereko*, the cloth or skin fastened round a mother's neck or shoulder and slung on her back, in which she carries her child till it is weaned, that is, till it has reached the age of two or three years. The *mbereko*, when made of tanned skin is often decorated gaily with beads. *Ku-deka* is the verb meaning to carry in this way.

[2] *Bwalo*, the communal open space in a village. Boys of five or six years of age, who are too old to continue to sleep with their parents, go to a communal hut until they are married. This hut is known as the "*bwalo*" hut, and the boys are said to be "in the *bwalo*."

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

BRIEFER STUDIES AND ANNOTATIONS

THE PERCEPTION OF HISTORY IN A PLURAL SOCIETY

A Study of an Ngoni Group in Northern Rhodesia[1]

J. A. BARNES

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In non-literate societies there is, strictly speaking, no history; for there are no documents, and history, in the sense of historiography, is essentially the study of contemporary documents. There are only legends by which to a greater or less degree present conditions are related to or explained by alleged former conditions.[2] In fully literate societies with a well documentated past, legends take different forms and it is often difficult to distinguish legend from history. In modern societies many socially significant legends relate to the immediate past rather than to antiquity. It is of interest, therefore, to examine what kinds of legend are current in societies shifting from non-literacy to literacy and to what extent they have a history.

In many Western cultures the earliest surviving documents are chronicles or codes of law. At an early stage writing was employed to record facts of wide interest rather than things of significance only to a few. When Africans first become literate they employ their skill in writing letters to one another. Only later do individuals begin to write essays, histories and novels and so develop a vernacular literature. They learn to write in an environment already containing a great quantity of vernacular printed matter issuing from European-controlled sources. The spatial separation of kinsfolk and friends brought about by labour migration makes letter-writing worth while and the emphemeral nature of these pencil-written documents is no disadvantage. It requires greater resources than most individuals and Native Authorities can muster to produce a family or tribal chronicle in permanent form.

1. Read at the Birmingham meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Section H, 1 September 1950, and published in the journal of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute under the title "History in a Changing Society".

2. Cf. Evans-Pritchard, "Marett lecture", p. 121.

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

The Fort Jameson Ngoni[3] are at this stage of transition. Many men and some women can read, if not write, and we can no longer call the tribe non-literate. Yet a society of this kind behaves in many ways as if it were non-literate. In particular, information about the past is transmitted orally and laws and customs are not committed to writing. In this paper I shall discuss some of the ways in which this information is manipulated. I shall distinguish between tales of fighting, relating to the period 1821–1898, which we may regard as tribal legends of origin; beliefs about customary behaviour relating to the same period; private legends which serve to explain the form of relations between present-day groups; and lastly history proper, documents describing contemporary events, if such exist.

Early travellers all speak of the various Ngoni groups as fierce warrior tribes interested only in destruction and plunder. With the spread of European control Ngoni raids ceased. Today in villages inhabited mainly by women and children, with scraggy animals and eroded gardens, the traveller looking for signs of a military tradition sees only khaki greatcoats and battle-dress. Among the Fort Jameson group, if not elsewhere, the great cowhide shields, and the regiments which carried them, have disappeared. Yet the battles of the past are still remembered and are called to mind in songs sung at drunken parties, in tales told to children and, importunately, to sympathetic strangers. Many of these songs are in the old Ngoni language now largely forgotten, and singers cannot give any precise meaning to the songs they sing. They are the relics of the past learnt parrot-fashion and in the context in which they are sung they do not require any specific reference. In our own culture we do not need to know who were the April rainers before we can sing "Green grow the rushes, O". Prose tales, however, are in ordinary speech and describe military exploits of people known to the speaker, or preparations for raiding ordered by the Paramount Chief and carried out by his lieutenants. The most frequently recounted battle of all is the fight between Ngoni and British troops in 1898. Many men and women are still alive who remember the fighting or even took part in it. The cataclysmic changes which followed the Ngoni defeat and the unusual weapons used combine to make the battle memorable. It is the only admitted defeat, for all other tales tell only of victory. The Ngoni defeated the Bemba, Wisa, Cewa, Kunda, and so on.

We know from contemporary travellers' accounts that though on the whole the Ngoni were successful against their neighbours, their run of successes was not unbroken. There is evidence that on occasion even the Cewa raided the Ngoni and took captives. We may regard the form taken by these legends as due in part to the process found in most cultures by which victories are remembered and defeats forgotten. But the distortion introduced is not only the elimination of defeat. The Administration and the Missions have,

3. I worked among these people during 1946–49 while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

one party of them came up from the south, and partly to divisions among the Ngoni during the period of settlement.

About 115 years ago the ancestors of these Ngoni left their homes in the present Zululand and Swaziland for their long trek north. The immediate cause of their departure was the defeat of Zwidi, chief of the Ndwandwe people, by Chaka, the history of whose military career in Zululand is well known and needs no repetition here. As part of Zwidi's people, the Ngoni did not want to stay under Chaka, and the same impetus and military skill which set up Chaka as the Zulu Napoleon drove the Ngoni northward as far as Lake Tanganyika, a conquering military horde amassing followers on the way. To-day they are found in three large groups and several smaller ones, the large groups known as the 'countries' of Mpezeni, Mwambera, and Gomani, who are the Ngoni Paramount Chiefs.[1]

These groups of people with their southern origin, settled among people who had a totally different language and social structure, present to the anthropologist a highly complex situation to investigate. He must at the outset ask the questions, 'Who are these Ngoni? Have they a separate identity as a people, marked by distinctive social and political institutions?' After living among them for nearly a year I am convinced that it is correct to speak of the Ngoni as a distinctive group; that they themselves are very conscious of their separate identity as a people, and that they can point to certain of their institutions, notably their language and political, territorial, and kinship groupings, which are definitely Ngoni, that is, of southern origin, and which distinguish them from the people among whom they settled. The complexities of this situation involve the analysing of the ethnic elements included in this term 'Ngoni' and the determining of the sense in which it is to be used. They involve also an explanation of what is meant by the expression 'a distinctive Ngoni culture', or 'distinctive Ngoni institutions'. The anthropologist who is interested in culture contact must go further and indicate the nature of the double contact caused first by the intermingling of the Ngoni with other tribes, and then by the advent of the Europeans. It is not possible in this article to do justice to all these aspects of an intricate problem.

[1] For the purposes of this article these are the only groups which will be considered.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

Stated very briefly, the problem is this: an Ngoni aristocratic minority created an Ngoni 'state' of mixed ethnic units, imposed a national identity on all who formed part of it, and inspired a real 'national feeling' among those who were assimilated. In this article I propose to look at this problem as it exists to-day in the light of white contact, and more particularly as a prelude to Indirect Rule. My thesis is that Ngoni 'national feeling' is based on the traditions of their past—on the story of their southern origin, their trek from the south, and their settlement in their present areas. I shall show how the continued preservation of their distinctive institutions, together with their strong historical sense, gave them a dominant position in the country, which was enforced through their military and political supremacy. This supremacy was first challenged and then overthrown by the arrival of the Europeans and the defeat of the Ngoni military power. The situation thus created is the key to the Ngoni attitude towards white contact to-day.

The plan of work which I adopted at the beginning had as its aim the establishing of certain essential data—namely, to determine the principles of local or territorial settlement in relation to the political organization and the ethnic constitution of the area. This involved making maps of the Paramount Chief's 'country' and of the 'countries' of his subordinate chiefs, showing the areas over which individuals exercised authority and their relation to those above and below them in the political hierarchy. It also involved making a number of village plans, showing the alignment of houses on the village site, the names and clans of the inhabitants and their mutual relations in terms of kinship groups and village organization.[1] In villages called Ngoni villages, that is, where the 'owner' of the village was of a recognized Ngoni clan and where there was a nucleus of Ngoni clansmen, the individuals in Ngoni clans numbered from 25–75 per cent. of the total inhabitants, the average being about 45 per cent. In a number of the villages where no Ngoni clans were represented, the villagers nevertheless asserted, 'We are Ngoni, because we are the

[1] This collecting of village plans was viewed with some suspicion at first as a new way of helping the Government to catch tax defaulters. However, when I promised the Paramount Chief that no one in the locality should see the village plans, he sent out word that I was to be given all the information I needed, and no one need fear the consequences.

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people of Mpezeni'. When questioned, they acknowledged their local origin as Nsenga or Chewa by kinship and clan, but claimed the name Ngoni in terms of their political allegiance. It is worth while mentioning here that this claim to be Ngoni is made with even more force when men are away from home on the mines or at other work. I found men on the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt and in Johannesburg assert emphatically that they were Ngoni because they were the people of Mpezeni or Gomani, at the same time giving their clan names with a grin because they knew it would reveal their Chewa or Nsenga origin. It is 'the thing' to pass as Ngoni if you can carry it off and in strange places—where the acid test of the clan name is not known—it is easy to do this. A group of Nyasaland men newly arrived on the Crown Mines in Johannesburg told me confidentially, 'Here we say only, "We are all Ngoni". You know that our clan names are Chewa or Tumbuka, but we are the people of Gomani or of Mwambera, and so we say we are Ngoni. And then people are respecting us.' The prestige in the name Ngoni is a matter of pride, not only in their own country, but far and wide in Africa.

The chiefs and other important men among the Ngoni recognize that they are a very mixed group ethnically. When asked, 'What is the meaning of a clan?' they reply, 'It shows a man's tribe that we may know how to respect him.'[1] It is hardly correct, therefore, to speak of the Ngoni as a tribe, for from Natal to Tanganyika men of many 'tribes' joined, or were captured and forcibly assimilated by, the original nucleus of Zulu and Swazi warriors, to be welded by their

[1] I avoid using vernacular terms in this article because usually the Ngoni, Chewa, Nsenga, and Tumbuka terms are all different. The field worker has to make a comparative linguistic table giving equivalent meanings in vernacular terms. Here I use the English word 'clan' to express the unilateral group according to kinship descent. 'Tribe' should be used in a cultural sense, of a group of people possessing a common language and common institutions. The ambiguity with which 'tribe' and its vernacular equivalents is used, by Europeans and Africans alike, necessitates an investigation on linguistic and historical lines. The so-called Chewa tribe, for example, rarely, if ever, use the word Chewa, but refer to themselves as Ntumba, Maravi, &c. The Ngoni, speaking of themselves in the south, refer to the Ndwandwe, Ntungwa, &c., and only use the 'blanket term' Zulu or Swazi when they think you are ignorant of the finer distinctions. I use the word 'tribe' here to express these distinctive groups, but it is impossible to avoid some ambiguity without long linguistic digressions.

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political and military organization into an effective group. What meaning, therefore, can we give to the term 'Ngoni', and how can this group which calls itself Ngoni be analysed into its component parts?

II. WHAT DOES THE TERM 'NGONI' MEAN? The references made hitherto show that the term 'Ngoni' is used in several different connotations. It is, strictly speaking, an historical linguistic term, and referred originally to that group of clans described as 'Nguni' because they spoke a language classified to-day as the Nguni dialects.[1] Somewhere on the march north the Ngoni changed the *u* to an *o*, and arrived in their present areas saying 'We are Ngoni'. They assert emphatically that it was on the march they began to say 'We are Ngoni', and they suggest that it was important to have some general term to cover individuals from many mixed groups.

The name Ngoni having been assumed on the march north, it obviously at first only covered those clans which were of true southern origin, or as we should say to-day, of Zulu or Swazi stock. This is the meaning which Ngoni still has when used in its narrow or strict sense to-day. In collecting the clan names in a village, for example, the headman says 'Those are Ngoni, those are Makalanga, those are Nsenga', and so on. The true Ngoni clans are those most highly honoured, the real aristocrats, and a little experience teaches the field worker to recognize their bearing as they walk about among the rest. In a village containing several clans, the houses of the Ngoni clans occupy the most honourable places in the middle of the horse-shoe formation surrounding the cattle kraal. In any meeting at a chief's village the men and women of Ngoni clans sit nearest to the chief and drink beer before the rest. This ranking by clans, however, does not stop at the true Ngoni. They lead the hierarchy, but other clans also claim precedence in a rough geographical order of the tribes absorbed from south to north. The true Ngoni illustrate this by saying, 'In old days the only men who were made *indunas* were those of the Swazi, Zulu, Suto, and Tonga clans. After we settled here, *indunas* were made from the Makalanga, Nsenga, and Sukuma clans'. There is therefore

[1] See *Bantu Studies*, Sept. 1934, for classification of the South African languages. Also A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, for list of Nguni clans.

it might almost be called nation-building. And when you have heard the Ngoni Paramount discuss the position of minorities in his country, and his claim to territories no longer under his rule, you could almost imagine you were in the corridors of the League Secretariat at Geneva.

The Ngoni state, however, to-day is not only a political structure, a framework for political and social life. Within that structure, forming parts of it, are institutions embodying those social, political, economic, and ethical values which are peculiarly Ngoni. The Ngoni, that is to say, when they absorbed other peoples into their state, imposed upon them a new social order together with the values inherent in that order. Patrilineal succession and inheritance, for example, introduced by the Ngoni, was bound up with the relations of father to son, the acquiring and distribution of cattle, the worship of clan and family ancestors. Each institution had its clearly related rules and values, and these are made explicit by the Ngoni when they describe them. The casual European observer in the country sees only the Paramount Chief and his subordinate chiefs ruling over a welter of tribes with a confusing mixture of social behaviour. To the Ngoni, however, and to the anthropologist who follows their lead, the pattern of society which they set up is clear and definite; it has a cultural reality of its own. The seeming welter of tribes is in reality an ordered relationship. Each group, tribe, or clan, has its recognized place *vis-à-vis* other groups. Within that ordered relationship the different groups have pursued a process of preserving some customs and adopting others, and they can give a coherent account of what they have retained and what they have borrowed. The real Ngoni do not admit to borrowing much. They like to think of their society as very distinctive as well as being well integrated. Yet the degree of modification in Ngoni society needs very close investigation because it shows much variety in different localities.

When they entered their present areas the Ngoni were very inferior in numbers to the indigenous people. How was it then that they were able to subdue them? And having subdued them, how did they pre-

mark' of the Ngoni as various forms of tattooing were of other tribes. Ear-piercing was sometimes forced (i.e. upon captives taken in war), sometimes voluntary. To-day children of local clans are teased by children of Ngoni clans and called 'Chewa' if they have not had their ears pierced, and they beg their mothers to take them to the 'doctor' to be 'made Ngoni'.

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serve their own culture, so that they were not submerged in the very different cultures round them? The Ngoni themselves give the answer to this first question, saying, 'We fought with spears and shields; those others had only bows and arrows and sometimes guns.'[1] The making of these shields, which formerly gave courage and protection to the warriors, is to this day almost a ritual. To watch a chief working at one on the threshold of his hut, or a village headman and his friends cutting and shaping one in the kraal, is to realize the value put on them by the Ngoni. They refuse to make them for sale as curiosities, and several Europeans have told me that they have tried in vain to get one.

Having conquered by the shield and spear, the Ngoni maintained their prestige by their highly developed political organization. All around them were small chieftains owning a few villages with no integration in any large political unit.[2] The Ngoni state was focussed in the *inkosi*, the Paramount Chief, who was at once the 'owner'[3] of the land, the 'head'[3] of the state, and the 'father'[3] of his people. The Ngoni, as we have seen, are always ready to indicate those institutions and related traditions which mark them off from the surrounding tribes, and which give their state a cultural reality of its own. They point first to their language and their traditions of Dingiswayo, Zwidi, and Chaka as proving their southern origin. Other neighbouring peoples have vague traditions of wandering from north to south, or west to east, but the Ngoni know exactly where they came from and by what route. Their language is almost identical with old Zulu. I was told by many Europeans that it hardly existed any longer, and I was therefore surprised to find to what an extent it is still spoken and used. Most of the true Ngoni to-day are bilingual[4]; with the exception of a few very old Ngoni people, everyone to-day speaks one of the local vernaculars, Nsenga, Tumbuka, or Chewa.[5] Ngoni is the language of the aristocrats, and a large proportion of the true

[1] The kind of antique guns traded to the Chewa by the Portuguese and Arabs were no match for the Ngoni skill with the long throwing-spear or the short stabbing-assegai, and the bullets were such that the stout cow-hide shields of the Ngoni could withstand them. Hence the consternation of the Ngoni when the machine-gun bullets of the British troops pierced their shields in the Ngoni 'war'.

[2] With the possible exception of Chikuramayembe, Chief of the Henga.

[3] Translations of vernacular terms.

[4] Or trilingual if they know English too.

[5] The same as Nyanja.

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history in order to prove their unity with the true Ngoni. It is nevertheless recognized that the aristocrats, through their kinship links with the past, have the best knowledge; the rest listen and defer to them. For matters relating to history are no antiquarian interest to the Ngoni. It is probable that recalling history and dwelling on the great days of the past is to some extent a compensation for what the Ngoni consider the indignities of their position to-day. Yet it is also a stimulus to them to maintain their separate identity and to revere their institutions. Tradition supports rank, by recognizing the historical importance of certain clans; and rank preserves tradition because intimate knowledge is the proud monopoly of certain families.

V. TRADITION AND LEGEND AS DOCUMENTATION. To the anthropologist who examines the part played by tradition and legend in the culture of a people, Professor Malinowski has given an invaluable lead. He suggests that myths are the charter and documentation for traditional tribal life, 'statements of reality which live in the institutions and pursuits of the people';[1] and that legend is re-interpreted history. All peoples of whatever level of civilization interpret history in the light of their beliefs about themselves, their achievements, and their destiny. The Ngoni are no exception to this. Sometimes they relate factual history which is verifiable and accurate. At other times it is probably part fact, part fiction. Yet at all times the emphasis in, and interpretation of, tradition, has a definite purpose, and it is possible to see how a standardized form of a narrative has come to be accepted and believed in. The version of a narrative at one time was interpreted or moulded to serve a purpose. Having been established, it then moulds the thinking of the people on that particular issue. The vexed question of the supremacy of the two Paramounts, Mpezeni and Mwambera[2] is a case in point. The basis of the story of the original dispute is the same, but the versions as told in each 'country' differ in a succession of minute details, whose arrangement and emphasis prove the point in each case. Mpezeni's historians have arranged the details to prove that he is the rightful *inkosi*; Mwambera's historians

[1] B. Malinowski. Article on Culture in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*.

[2] The two Paramounts at present holding these titles are grandsons of the first holders, to whom I refer as old Mpezeni.

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the mental adjustments necessary to white contact. They still resent white intrusion and its results, economic, administrative, and missionary. At the same time many of them earnestly wish for a solution of the present tension, but towards such a solution there is no easy short cut.

VIII. Conclusions. Conclusions reached after the first period of field work are generally given with a certain reserve, especially in a complex field such as the Ngoni present. I think, however, that the conclusions in this paper can be stated with some certainty, and as dogmatic statements they form a basis for further field work. For they set the main problems for the detailed study of the Ngoni, and also of the Ngoni as a field for observing culture contact. In this article I hope that the three chief elements in the study have emerged, namely, the problem of Ngoni society as a cultural and political unit; the culture contact problems due to the contact, and part fusion, with local tribes; and the modern culture contact problems due to European penetration.

1. The Ngoni as a group must be regarded from two points of view: those who ethnically have a right to be called Ngoni, who are members of recognized Ngoni clans, with an acknowledged southern origin; and all those who live in the territory of the Ngoni Paramount Chief, and call themselves his people. These last were incorporated into the Ngoni state by the first group, who are still the ruling aristocracy, but the incorporated people now share in Ngoni 'national sentiment' and have made certain sociological changes in order to conform to Ngoni culture. It is their southern origin and their well remembered traditions of the past which confer distinctiveness on the true Ngoni, and on the state which they built. It is to their past they also turn for the charter for those institutions which are recognized as distinctively Ngoni, such as the Paramount Chieftainship, the hierarchy of rank, and patrilineal succession. Their historical origin and military achievements form also the charter for their former position as rulers of the country which they held before the advent of the Europeans.

2. The Europeans in two of the Ngoni areas destroyed the unique position of the Ngoni by defeating their armies. These armies had

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Rule? There might have been a time, before the Ngoni wars, when treaties could have been made with the Ngoni Paramount Chiefs, and the Ngoni state have evolved without defeat. Policy, however, was different in those days, and strong chiefs were crushed. The demand now is for strong tribal organization which can carry on its own administration with the minimum of European interference and direction. The vital question is: has that moment gone for the Ngoni? Has their defeat, not only military, but economic and political, so taken the heart out of them, that they can no longer rebuild their tribal organization and make a success of Indirect Rule?

The answer to that question has two desiderata. One is a thorough intensive study of Ngoni society and Ngoni institutions as they exist to-day, and of the relation of the true Ngoni to those who call themselves Ngoni. The other is the willingness of Europeans, officials, missionaries, and settlers, to show some recognition of Ngoni pride in their past. The Ngoni are not children. They do not want a toy called Indirect Rule handed out to them to play with. If their political aspirations were appreciated and their racial pride acknowledged, they could make a successful synthesis between Ngoni institutions and modern administration with its concomitants of modern education and modern economic methods. They themselves discuss frequently in the men's talking places in the villages such a synthesis of Ngoni and western culture. The attempt in one area in Nyasaland to work out such a synthesis is a sign that it is not impossible. With fuller knowledge and co-operation on both sides the strength of Ngoni national sentiment might be used to make a success of the policy of Indirect Rule.

MARGARET READ.

Résumé

TRADITION ET PRESTIGE CHEZ LES NGONI

Les Ngoni sont une section des Zoulou qui habitent l'Afrique orientale. Le vocable Ngoni désigne aujourd'hui deux groupes: les descendants des clans originels qui, il y a cent cinquante ans environ, émigrèrent vers le nord et les membres des tribus assujetties et absorbées dans l'état Ngoni. Les Ngoni proprement dits forment une aristocratie, qui se distingue par la communauté clanique et la connaissance de la langue Ngoni originelle et des traditions historiques de la tribu. Leurs institutions également diffèrent de celles des tribus soumises

12: Barnes--1 E-5 (1946-1948) 1948 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni

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The Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni

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During the 1820s, the rise to power of the Zulu chief Chaka in South Africa led to a number of migrations to the north led by lesser chiefs who wished to avoid a clash with the Zulu armies, or who had already clashed and had been defeated. The descendants of these migrants are to-day living scattered over East Africa, from Lake Victoria to near Lourenço Marques. Many of these still call themselves Ngoni, a term derived from Nguni, a word used to describe themselves while they were still in the south. The leader of one of these Ngoni migrations was Zwangendaba, and it is his descendants who are to be found in Northern Rhodesia and elsewhere at the present time. The only group in this country recognised as Ngoni by the Administration is to be found in Fort Jameson District, under Paramount Chief Mpezeni. Formerly a tribe living in Lundazi District under Chief Magodi was officially called Ngoni, but they are now known to the Administration as Tumbuka. They represent the western salient of the old empire of Mombera, a son of Zwangendaba, whose descendant is now a chief in Nyasaland. This article deals only with the people under Chief Mpezeni.

Zwangendaba led his people northwards, fighting and taking captives as he went, crossed the Zambezi in 1835, an event that happened to coincide with a solar eclipse, and after passing through the present-day Eastern Province, died near Lake Tanganyika in about 1845. His party then split up, one son, Mpezeni, leading his followers south-westwards towards the Bemba and the Wisa in the Northern Province. From there they moved southwards, crossed the Luangwa, and settled in Petauke District. In about 1865 they moved eastwards and settled to the north of the Mpangwe Hills in Fort Jameson District. Some ten years later they went further east, and in 1881, when they were first visited by a European, they had reached

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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535 challenge is sent from one group of villages to another. And on the day appointed the strangers arrive walking in procession. The girls and women are dressed in their gaudiest clothes, and their heads and arms are decked with bright coloured beads, and the claws of lions and leopards. The lads carry dancing sticks and miniature shields. The strangers open the dance. The girls standing together and holding reed wands in their hands sing in chorus, while the men arranged in a great semi-circle dance and sing. Their dance is wonderfully energetic and graceful, and is executed with a rythm and unison which is fascinating. You can hear a long way off the hundred feet come down on the earth of the kraal with a thud as of one man. When they have danced for about an hour they give way to their rivals. The home villagers step in and dance for another hour. And so on they go from ten o'clock till about four. There is no mingling of men and women. And the whole exercise is chaste, healthful, and beautiful. It is quite the show piece of our village life.

●181 And now a few remarks in conclusion on their religious beliefs. I do not intend to say much on this point as one only can get at the inner meaning of their faith after long and careful investigation,
771 and with a thorough knowledge of their language. Their religion was not formulated. If you ask them about it they can tell you little or nothing. They will deny that they knew anything of God until we came. Their observances were scarcely recognised by themselves, they were the spontaneous and almost unconscious expression of a people groping after the unknown God if haply they might find Him. They recognise a spirit who presides over the universe.

776 They have a name for Him which means the great great one. But the ordinary name is the one which south of the Zambesi is used for all white men, and seems also to imply some feeling of wisdom and greatness. But they seem to have no idea of God's imminence in the world. He is rather the mighty far away Spirit to whom men cannot come. Along with this, homage is made to
771 great mountains and ancient trees, and to the strong elemental forces, as thunder and lightening. But this seems to me to be an
[177] addition which has come through their residence among the Tumbuka.

769 The great pervading article in their religious life is reverence and dread of the ancestral spirits. The whole land is full of their presence. And offerings are continually made to them to appease